ARCHITECTURE, THE BODY AND AUTHORITY IN PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

This thesis aims to build on existing architectural theory, in which an absence of discourse on the body has been identified (Imrie, 2003), by analysing representations of architecture and the body in performance. The research specifically examines the relationship between the body, architecture and authority in performance through the analysis of several performance works. The architectural theory that the work builds on is drawn from two essays: Anthony Vidler's "Architecture Dismembered" (1996), and Bernard Tschumi's "The Violence of Architecture" (1996). The former informs the conceptual framework of this thesis and much of how the case study performances have been analysed; the latter builds the concept of architectural authority over the body. The concepts drawn from Vidler's essay—namely, three themes of how architecture relates to the body—are then 'short circuited', in the Žižekian sense, against the case study performances.

The performance work case studies are analysed through various methods, including textual analysis of scripts, visual analysis of production design, existing literature reviews and comments by the creators of the works. The first theme Vidler identifies that will be explored in this thesis is "the sense that the environment as a whole is endowed with bodily or at least organic characteristics" (1996, p. 71), and will be used to frame an analysis of the play *Stockholm* (2007) by Briony Lavery, in which an animated and interactive theatre set becomes a character. The second theme drawn from Vidler's text is "the notion that building *is* a body of some kind" (1996, p. 71), through which *Boy Girl Wall* (2010) by The Escapists and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c. 1596) by William Shakespeare will be analysed, with a particular focus on scenes from both of these plays in which a performer's body is used to represent a wall or another aspect of architecture. The third theme is "the idea that the building embodies some states of the body or, more importantly, states of mind based on bodily sensation" (Vidler, 1996, p. 71), which is discussed through a number of works, including a selection of Harold Pinter's plays and the Belarus Free Theatre's production of *Being Harold Pinter* (2008). This last theme draws more on the political associations of architecture and how architecture casts its authority over the body through oppressive states of mind, torture and bodily sensations.

Through these case studies and their short circuiting of Vidler's "Architecture Dismembered", there are a number of new points that that can usefully expand and build on architectural theory. Much of what is found through the analysis of the case studies supports Vidler's thesis and central argument that the body as the foundation for architecture has always been a myth. That is, that architecture has long been concerned with a body that is idealised and of unrealistic proportions, and that through the medium of performance—a discipline that is richly concerned with the body—a new understanding of a real, moving, even abject, body can be read and understood for architecture and architectural theorists wishing to expand their thinking in this area. Ultimately, this research finds that while architecture exerts authority over the body, as both Vidler and Tschumi discuss, it is through the body and the body in reciprocal co-constructive relationships with architecture that rejection or subversion of the power and authority embodied in architecture can be deployed.

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature:

Date: 8/10/2015.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

While designing the set for a production of Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker,* and amateur production directed by Shane Anthony Jones for the Vena Cava Theatre company in 2007 (Figure 1), I became acutely aware of the relationship between the body and theatre sets that mimicked domestic architecture. In particular, I became aware of the way in which a detailed mimetic theatre set can obscure, even diminish, the presence of the body (Volz, 2010, p. 56). Pinter's earlier plays, including *The Caretaker*, require detailed sets with numerous properties designed to mimic domestic spaces and places that, at times, overshadow particular characters. The set design controls the actors' bodies, restricting their movements, sometimes occupying the foreground more profoundly than the characters (Volz, 2010, p. 58). In this way, as Victor Cahn argues (1993, p. 84), the set design amplifies the tensions in the playtext itself, in which the characters are typically involved in an intense struggle over territory compounded by their existence being contained within the boundaries of the domestic room they inhabit. They are controlled, constrained, and trapped in an existence that does not continue beyond the walls of the mimetic domestic space that Pinter creates for them, and the cultural ideologies embodied in domestic space (Volz, 2010, p. 56). The set for a Pinter play exerts authority over the characters, with the intention of creating tension between the characters who inhabit it, and creating a struggle for power within the confines of the domestic setting. In my design for the aforementioned production of *The Caretaker*, this meant that the actors' bodies appear to disappear into the crowded domestic setting, their bodies becoming the equivalent of simply another prop or element of the set on stage.

Figure 1: *The Caretaker* set by Kirsty Volz. Play directed by Shane Anthony Jones. Photograph by Ian Sinclair.

The questions that arose while creating this set led me to a larger-scale investigation of realist theatrical sets that represent the spatial arrangements of the domestic house on stage, and, in doing so, prescribe particular roles and relationships for the characters in the play. As well as researching the realist sets in the work of Pinter, I examined realist sets in other plays, such as the house depicted in David Williamson's *Don's Party* (1971). In this research, I used a combination of architectural theory—in particular, Henri Lefebvre's 1974 text *The Production of Space*, and Beatriz Colomina's essay "Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" in her edited collection of essays *Sexuality and Space* (Colomina, 1992, p. 73-130)—and theatrical theory; in particular, Gay McAuley's *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (1999) and Joanna Tompkins' *Unsettling Space*: *Contestations in Contemporary Australian Theatre* (2006), to examine the nature and function of these sets.

Reading performance theory texts throughout this research considerably expanded my understanding of the body and the body in domestic architecture. From this research, which I submitted as part of my final research project for my Master of Architecture in 2010, I started to see that performance theory and practice could be very useful in expanding architectural theory's efforts to deal with living, breathing human bodies in often oppressive domestic spaces and places.

Investigating this authority that the mimetic domestic theatre set, or the box set, exerts over performers' bodies was an initial motivation for this thesis. As an architect, and a theorist of architecture, I have long been aware of the way in which architecture constructs particular spaces for bodies, and, in doing so, dictates the way in which bodies behave and interact (Tschumi, 1996, 122). I have also been aware of the way in which architectural theory has struggled to describe the efforts of real, living, moving bodies to subvert the control domestic and urban architecture has over them (Tschumi, 1996, 124). As a set designer and scenographer creating a set for *The Caretaker*, I started to become aware of the way in which plays, performances, and installations present bodies living through this struggle, who attempt to overcome personal, social or political oppression via their relationship with the set around them. In the thesis that follows, I will bring performance and performance theory together with architectural theory to see what the former can offer the latter in developing a richer understanding of the body, the perceived authority that

architecture has over the body, and efforts that bodies make to overcome this control.

I will examine a number of different set designs for traditional plays, performances, and performance art pieces, focusing on the way in which each piece embodies a struggle between the human body and domestic or urban architecture. I will ask what the examination of these pieces can contribute, not so much to performance theory—which has always embraced analysis of living, breathing, moving bodies—but to architectural theory, which has struggled to describe how such bodies inhabit and subvert architectural spaces (Imrie, 2003, 51). I will deploy an interdisciplinary line of inquiry, bringing descriptions of performances and the way they depict the body in relation to architecture—inhabiting it and struggling against it—into proximity with architectural theory, attempting to describe the same relationships, in order to investigate what each discipline can contribute to the other's reading of the body in space. In doing so, I will use a reading of performance and performance theory to open up new insights into the relationship between the body, architecture and authority for architectural theory.

1.1.1 Theatre Set Design in the 20th Century

Terms like 'set design', 'scenography', 'set designer', and 'scenographer' are relatively modern, having emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century in the wake of practical work by early set designers and set design theorists, such as Adolphe Appia, Edward Gordon Craig, Josef Svoboda. Oskar Schlemmer, Luybov Popova, Vsevolod Meyerhold and Tadeusz Kantor, among others (Di Benedetto, 2013, p. 21). Theatrical performances had always unfolded in diverse venues, from streets to public halls to a variety of differently formatted amphitheatres and auditoriums. These venues were designed not just to enable audiences to see, hear, and interact with actors on stage in a range of different ways, but also to relate to the cultural ideologies embodied in the stage plays in a variety of ways. In the late 19th and early 20th century, as new sound, light and staging technologies emerged, the new wave of set designers and scenographers saw new possibilities—including the possibility of creating a set design that would mimic, and naturalise, the domestic social relationships depicted in it via a likeness to life.

In the late 19th century, Swiss architect, theorist and set designer Adolphe

Appia criticised the limitations of the life-like box set and began theorised a new approach to scenogarphic design that was being adopted by set designers at the time, arguing that, in his own work, he was attempting to create designs in which "...the actor no longer walks *in front* of the painted light and shadows; he is immersed in an atmosphere that is *destined* for him" (Appia cited in Di Benedetto, 2013, p. 21). In Appia's approach, the actors' bodies became part of the set design, in a fully controlled space designed to facilitate and control their movement and behaviours, and, in doing so, embodied late-19th and early-20th century Western ideas about architecture as a purifying element of the body (Wigley, 1995, p. 68). This same sentiment was echoed by early-20th-century scenographer Edward Gordon Craig's concept of the actor's body as an "Über-marionette" (Di Benedetto, 2013, p. 38), a super-puppet, which is a controlled visual element that follows the demands of the directors and now the designer.

While these designers were rallying against the mimicry affects of the box set, their design work for the stage still sort to exert authority over the performers' bodies. This authority that the box set possesses over performers' bodies is designed to mimic classical architectural principles, in which architectural design of domestic spaces and places aims to order, control and prescribe what types of people, relationships, and social processes can unfold within these spaces. Unsurprisingly, the functioning of the box set has been analysed, critiqued and challenged by a range of theatre theorists and practitioners throughout the 20th century, seeking in their theory and their alternative set design practices to subvert—or stage the struggle to subvert—the socially prescribed roles and relationships the realist set tends to impose on actors' and characters' bodies.

1.1.2 The Body, Architecture and Authority

The relationship between the body, architecture and authority depicted in late-19th and early-20th-century realist set design, staging and direction is familiar to architectural theory and practice. The authority that architecture holds over the body is identified, theorised and challenged by a number of architects, architectural theorists and spatial theorists (e.g. Vidler, 1996; Tschumi, 1996; Lefebvre, 1974; Soja, 2008; Imrie, 2003; Lambert, 2012; Grosz, 1999; Wigley, 1995; Colomina, 1992). In general, these theorists all express the same issues, arguing that

architectural practice, theory, education and discourse has largely ignored the complex, messy, lived body (Imrie, 2003; Vidler, 1996; Tschumi, 1996; Lefebvre, 1974; Soja, 2008; Imrie, 2003; Lambert, 2012; Grosz, 1999). From Vitruvius' descriptions in the first century BC of the idealised proportions of the body as the basis for architectural form to the reliance on texts such as *The Metric Handbook* for anthropometric data by architects, industrial designers and interior designers in the 21st century, the body has long been poorly understood and represented in architectural design. Through numerous iterations—most notably, Leonardo da Vinci's interpretation of 'The Vitruvian Man' in the 16th century and Le Corbusier's 'Modular' body of the 20th century—the body has been abstracted, idealised and excessively simplified by architects and designers.

Following on from the classical language of proportional control and ornamentation in architecture initiated by Vitruvius, early French Renaissance architects developed a systematic language for architecture premised on the characteristics of austerity and logic (Aureli, 2011, p. 151). This 'logic' based architecture on a set of standardised elements that included the body, and architecture sought to purify and control the body. This approach continued into late modern architecture and is still practiced in architecture today.

The 20th century saw the most detailed documentation on standardising the body. This was especially the case in architecture and industrial design through print and later digital publications that flattened, dimensioned and reduced the body to a graphic element on a Cartesian plane. Such standardisation proliferated through ease of access to print, and therefore this standard body became not only a Western body, but also a global body. This process of standardisation began in the Bauhaus in 1936 when Ernst Neufert created a book titled *Architects' Data,* which described the body—a male body—through a series of two-dimensional diagrams in plan, section and elevation that was saturated with standard dimensions for standing, sitting, walking and a limited number of other positions of the body. This rationalisation of the body continues to form the fundamental basis of understanding the body for the design of objects, furniture and buildings today (Lambert, 2012, p.4), and *Architects' Data* is still in publication (the latest edition dated 2012) and can be found in the bookshelves of most designers' offices.

Shortly after the publication of Neufert's work, Le Corbusier developed a

series of diagrams—again, two-dimensional diagrams on the Cartesian plane—titled the Modular. Despite the fact that Le Corbusier worked with industrial designer Charlotte Perriand to create these diagrams, they once again were only concerned with a male body in a limited number of positions (sitting, standing, etc.) (Lambert 2012, p. 4). Then, in 1974, industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss published *Architectural Graphic Standards*. While the book continued to represent the body as a two-dimensional graphic, it included a male and female body (Joe and Josephine), children, and, for the first time, a person in a wheelchair (Lambert, 2012, p. 6). Despite Dreyfuss' attempt to draw a broader representation of what a body can be, his work simply standardised a select series of bodies into simplified diagrams, while still neglecting that the body is a complex, moving, variable and three-dimensional being that inhabits space.

A number of books and articles focus on the inability of architecture to consider complex and diverse bodies. This literature comes from various disciplines, including sociology and philosophy (Lefebvre 1974; Soja 2008), feminist studies (Grosz 2001; Heynan 2005; Weissman 1992; Colomina 1991) and the field of architecture itself (Vidler 1996; Tschumi 1996; Lambert 2012; Aureli 2011). One article that clearly ties all of this history of bodily abstraction in design and architecture together is "Architects' Conceptions of the Human Body", written by prominent Universal Design academic Rob Imrie (2003). For the article, Imrie interviewed practicing architects and course tutors about how the body is considered in architecture. He found that, in both practice and theory, architecture has had a limited capacity to deal with a real, complex body. He writes that "the most influential architectural theories and practices fail to recognise bodily and physiological diversity, and there is a tendency for architects to design to specific technical standards and dimensions which revolve around a conception of the 'normal' body" (2003, p. 60). Imrie goes on to describe the standardised body that forms the basis of design, which

> conceives of the physical body as a machine and as a subject of mechanical laws. The body, in this view, is little more than an object with fixed measurable parts; it is neutered and neutral, that is, without sex, gender, race, or physical difference. (2003, p. 54)

As theorists like Imrie demonstrate, the discipline of architecture has

traditionally approached the body through abstracted, two-dimensional static diagrams that neglect to consider the body in its diverse and dynamic forms (Imrie, 2003). Architecture, as Anthony Vidler writes, has concerned itself with a uni-gendered body that is static and of unrealistic proportions; it is a discipline concerned with the body of a mythological being and not a human body (Vidler, 1970, p. 70).

This, of course, reflects a political manoeuvre within architectural theory and practice that is designed to control, constrain and order bodies by depicting them as, and designing spaces that deal with them as, Western culture's most valued type of body: the white, able-bodied, male ideal. The shortcomings of architectural theory are not accidental. They are a way of establishing, manipulating and maintaining authoritative control over the body, so that it speaks, moves, and interacts with other bodies in prescribed ways that are seen as socially productive rather than socially disruptive. The body, as dealt with in traditional architecture and traditional architectural theory—like the body, as dealt with in the box set of traditional realist theory—is a manageable, controllable one.

1.1.3 Attempts to Reinscribe the Body in Architecture

As indicated, there are a number of significant authors in and on the periphery of architectural discourse who have identified and investigated these issues. These authors have advocated including a more diverse spectrum of bodies in architectural theory and practice. In the postmodern era, a number of architects have sought to re-inscribe the body into architecture. Anthony Vidler lists the architects Coop Himmelblau, Bernard Tschumi and Daniel Libeskind as architects who are attempting to reinscribe the body into postmodern architecture (Vidler, 1996, p. 70). But, symbolically, this body is much different to the body seen previously in architecture; it is dissected, torn apart and mutilated. This is an architecture where the skin of the building, the façade, is removed; an architecture that is only one part of the body—the lungs, heart, skin, arms and so on (Vidler, 1996, p. 71).

Thus, ultimately, this too is an act of removing the real, lived body from architecture. In *The Production of Space* (1974), Henri Lefebvre writes that the notion of fragmenting or separating the body comes from the notion that the body is separate from space—that the body is a space within itself—when, in fact, there can

be no space without the body because the body *produces* space, physically, socially and mentally (1974, p. 43). Lefebvre's work is echoed by architectural theorist Bernard Tschumi when he writes "This also suggests that actions qualify spaces as much as spaces qualify actions; that space and action are inseparable and that no proper interpretation of architecture drawing or notation can refuse to consider this fact" (Tschumi, 1996, 125).

For Lefebvre though, the body is in itself space producing. In the chapter "Spatial Architectonics", Lefebvre writes that,

> "Space" is not a container with bodies as "things in space". This is the origin of the strategy of separation and fragmentation of the body—a space in itself —from the space it is in. If one accepts this absolute view, it follows that anybody can be placed in any location. The two become indifferent to each other; we should grasp the organism or object as a centre for the "production of space" around itself. In this view, space is not external to the body but generated by it. (1974, p. 46)

Without the body to inhabit the space—that is, the space that is constructed around the residual of objects, furniture or architecture—the space does not exist. Space and the body are inseparable, and the failure to understand the complexity of how a body can experience space is a shortcoming of the architectural design process. This thesis intends to expand upon this neglected discussion around the reciprocal relationship between the body and architecture that through a study of performance.

Exploring this reciprocity between the body and architectural space is the best way to expand on the existing notions within architectural discourse on the authority that architecture has over the body. The current understanding in architectural discourse of a unidirectional authority that architecture has over the body is derived from a simplified and abstract definition of the body, which continues to inform architectural practice to the exclusion of real and complex bodies (Imrie, 2003, p. 48). This is evidence through the technologically defined body used in architectural practice that describes the body as a two-dimensional, static graphic (Imrie, 2003, p. 51). While architectural theory has criticised this approach (Tschumi, 1996, Vidler, 1996, Grosz, 1999, Imrie, 2003), these texts still fail to consider real, physical bodies. Grosz and Vidler define the body through psychoanalysis. Informed by Freud and Lacan, they describe the body through the concept of the ego. While this work goes some way to alter the way the body is considered in architecture discourse, it still fails to consider the complexities of a moving, living body. The central aim of

this thesis is to introduce a reading of a complex body and its reciprocal authoritative relationship with architecture through analysing performance studies, since performance studies proffer a more complex and detailed understanding of the body. Understanding the body as complex alters the way that authority is understood between the body and architecture.

In this thesis, I will examine performances and performance theory to offer potentially new ways to disrupt this understanding of the authority embodied in architecture. Where this is perceived as being a unidirectional relationship—with architecture possessing all of the authority—this thesis will present a view of this authority as being shared between the body and architecture: that authority is drawn from *both* the body and architecture, and that neither can derive spatial dominance without the other as a point of reference.

1.2 Architecture, Authority and the Body in Performance

While performing arts theory has not always dealt perfectly with diverse bodies, it has a significantly greater amount of rigorous inquiry concerned with the body. Some researchers in performance argue that the body is central to research in performance, as "bodies are the material through which theatre researchers most often discuss performance; they are scrutinised, critiqued, displayed, transformed, gendered, controlled and determined in critical reviews, historical accounts and theorisations of practices such as theatre, live art and dance" (Kershaw, and Nicholson, 2011, p. 210). Theorists such as Gay McAuley nominate the body as the centre of the performing arts discipline, explaining that the body has more agency than any other element of performance. McAuley writes "it is through the body that all the contributing systems of meaning (visual, vocal, spatial, fictional) are activated, and the actor/performer is without doubt the most important agent in all the signifying processes involved in the performance event" (1999, p. 90). This focus on the body in performance, whereby the body is the centre of the discipline, has the potential to contribute significantly to the lack of inquiry regarding the body in architectural discourse. This is especially pertinent to architecture, where, as indicated in the previous discussion on architectural theory, a number of theorists have criticised the absence of the body from architectural practice, education and theory.

1.2.1 Architecture, Authority and the Body in Performance: An Example

An example is perhaps the best way to explain how examining performance has the potential to offer new insight into the notion of a reciprocated authority shared between the body and architecture, and how this will be explored in this thesis by bringing performance and performance theory together with architecture. The example that will be used to introduce the theory and concepts employed in this thesis is *Revolving Door* (2013) by Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, in collaboration with the Sydney Dance Company.[1] Here, performers' bodies exert authority over the space. The dancers move in a straight line, occupying the full diameter of a circular room, mimicking the actions of a revolving door, the sort that you might see at the entrance to a high-rise tower in populated cities. When a person enters the room, they are swept along with the movement of the dancers. Their movement through the room is dictated by the formation and direction in which the dancers are moving. Here, the body is more substantial than the architecture. The authority of a group of bodies in unison is palpable in *Revolving Door*. The performance draws inspiration from political rallies, as set out in the work's description:

> in *Revolving Door*, a group of dancers spontaneously form a line that goes from one end of a wall to the other, blocking the path in a similar fashion to a human barricade. The choreographed sequence of movements performed by the dancers can be seen to be drawn from political protests and military marches to chorus lines. (Sydney Dance Company, 2013)

Through performance, *Revolving Door* demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between architecture and the body currently absent from architectural discourse. The architecture is a backdrop, present but almost invisible, to the performers' bodies. However, Allora and Calzadilla's work challenges the notion of a purified architecture by creating an architectural element that consists of 10 individual bodies

[1] *Revolving Door* was presented part of the John Kaldor Public Art Project #27, *13 Rooms*, where 13 performance-based artists and more than 100 performers came together "to present an innovative group exhibition of 'living sculpture' within 13 purpose-built rooms." The exhibition ran for 11 days in 2013 and was curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Klaus Biesenbach (John Kaldor Projects, 2013). In the *13 Rooms* exhibition, the programming of the architecture was minimal: it was simply 13 empty rooms in a warehouse on Pier 2/3, Walsh Bay in Sydney; four walls with a door through which to enter. The space was dictated by the positioning of both the performers' and the spectators' bodies.

of varying proportions, not singular in gender, size or proportion, and moving in an unpredictable manner to their audience. It is this reciprocal relationship that performance conveys between the body and architecture that this thesis intends to study. Architecture's authority over the body is contingent on the body's obedience and vice versa—the body's authority over architecture can be enacted through a disobedience to architectural order.

In *Revolving* Door, the performers dictate and control the environment through their bodies and the imprecise way that their bodies move—challenging architecture's authority by mimicking it. This example of the authority enacted by the body through mimicking architecture demonstrates the way that this thesis will offer new insights to architectural theory through an examination of performance. Works such as *Revolving Door* demonstrate this complex relationship between the body, architecture and authority and make for new ways of thinking about both architecture and scenography and how the body relates to these built environments. As with this example of *Revolving Door*, performance has much to offer architectural theory in providing a new lens through which to glimpse new readings of how the body and architecture create structures of authority over each other.

1.3 Scope and Purposes

The purpose of this thesis is to examine a selection of performances and to investigate what these performances can contribute to the lacking conceptualisation of the real, living body in architectural theory and practice. Given the range of theorists who have discussed this problem in architectural theory, it is necessary to be selective regarding which architectural theorists, theories, this thesis will use to underpin its analysis. The two architectural theory essays selected are Bernard Tschumi's "Architecture and Violence" from *Architecture and Disjunction* (1996) and Anthony Vidler's "Architecture Dismembered" from *The Architectural Uncanny* (1996). These texts are two of the most cited works in architectural theory, representing prominent and perceptive thoughts on the topic, and are therefore most ready to be expanded on in terms of their ideas about how to deal with living, breathing bodies by bringing them together with performance.

1.3.1 Addressing the Body in Architecture Theory: Tschumi and Vidler

Bernard Tschumi (1944–) is a Swiss architect, architectural theorist and

commentator known for pioneering deconstructivism in architecture through his work on Parc De La Villete in Paris, a built work he devised in collaboration with Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman in 1982. His work has since bridged architectural theory and practice internationally (Wigley, 1988, p. 12). Anthony Vidler (1941–) is a British architectural theorist who has had a long-established academic career, starting at Princeton University in 1965. He is currently Dean of Architecture at Cooper Union (Cooper Union, 2013)

Tschumi and Vidler are the authors of the two central architectural theory essays utilised in this thesis to describe the existing perception of architecture as having spatial dominance over the body. Tschumi's "The Violence of Architecture" explicates and begins to challenge the concept of architectural authority over the body, while Vidler's "Architecture Dismembered" informs the conceptual framework of this thesis and much of how the case study performances have been analysed. In particular, his three themes of how the body and architecture relate and reference each other are employed in this thesis to organise the selected case studies. I will briefly discuss each author below.

Tschumi describes the way architecture dictates its program onto the body. He argues that architecture is the perpetrator of a violent act, which he describes as being "deeply Dionysian" (Tschumi, 1996, p. 125). He claims that architecture deliberately manipulates the way a body moves and inhabits space and that it does so in a physical and forceful way. According to Tschumi, the problem with architecture is that the architect will always be driven by a desire to exert authority over the body, directing bodies on pathways that they have pre-determined (Tschumi, 1996, p. 123). Tschumi says that the body "has always been suspect to architecture" (Tschumi, 1996, p. 130). The body is seen as an object to control, constrain, and oppress. For example, in "The Violence of Architecture", he says,

> Who will mastermind these exquisite spatial delights, these disturbing architectural tortures, the tortuous paths of promenades through delirious landscapes, theatrical events where actor complements decor? Who…? The architect?... The architect will always dream of purifying this uncontrolled violence, channeling obedient bodies along predictable paths and occasionally along ramps that provide striking vistas, ritualizing the transgression of bodies in space. (Tschumi 1996, p. 123)

Tschumi describes this aspiration for perfection in architecture and a desire for architecture to eliminate the uncontrolled intrusion of the body thus:

> first, there is the violence that all individuals inflict on spaces by their very presence, by their intrusion into the controlled order of architecture. Entering a building may be a delicate act, but it violates the balance of a precisely ordered geometry (do architectural photographs ever include runners, fighters, lovers?) (1996, p. 129)

Bodies that do not meet the criteria of Vitruvius' idealised proportions become problematic to architecture. They can potentially violate or threaten the purity of architectural space, as Tschumi writes:

> Bodies carve all sorts of new and unexpected spaces, through fluid or erratic motions. Architecture, then, is only an organism engaged in constant intercourse with users, whose bodies rush against the carefully established rules of architectural thought… it has always set limits to the most extreme architectural ambitions. The body disturbs the purity of architectural order. It is equivalent to a dangerous prohibition. (1996, p. 128)

According to Tschumi, there is no denying the explicit political agency of civic architecture, what he describes as the architect's desire for a "Nuremberg rally of everyday life" (1996, p. 127). Dictators handpicked architects to build their cities; for example, Adolf Hitler worked closely with Albert Speer to re-imagine Berlin, and Mussolini visited the architecture schools in Italy during his dictatorship to extol virtues of classicism (Kirk, 2005, p. 89). This thesis aims to elucidate that this authority is in fact reciprocal between architecture and the body. While architecture works to constrain or control the body, the body is also available to those who would challenge authoritative regimes as an instrument of choice when disrupting the overpowering act of architecture. For example, bodies on the rooftops of refugee detention centres draw international attention to their cause; groups of protestors in the foyer of an office tower throw the building's carefully planned program into chaos, close streets and overwhelm its shadowy presence; a gathering of bodies in a public square in front of a city hall is an assault on what the architecture represents (despite the space being designed for such a disturbance) (Volz, 2013, p. 37).

Anthony Vidler's work—particularly in "Architecture Dismembered"—theorises the gradual distancing between architecture and the body. In "Architecture Dismembered", Vidler elaborates on Tschumi's work, describing the historical authoritative relationship architecture has over the body. Vidler also hints at the often-ignored reciprocal relationship between the body and architecture, saying that architecture has always perceived itself as deriving its authority from the body (1996, 67).

The fault that Vidler identifies with this bodily foundation in classical architecture is that it is based on an idealised, abstracted body.

> In classical theory the (idealised) body was, so to speak, directly projected into the building, which both stood for it and represented its ideal perfection. The building derived its authority, proportional and compositional, from this body, and in a complementary way, the building then acted to confirm and establish the body—social and individual—in the world. (Vidler, 1996, 67)

Vidler analyses in detail the classical tradition of idealised proportions of the male body as the basis for architecture. He then examines the mechanised and technologically derived bodies of modernity throughout the 20th century, before moving on to what he describes as the dissected and mutilated body of postmodernity in the 21st century. In "Architecture Dismembered", he writes:

> The history of the bodily analogy in architecture, from Vitruvius to the present, might be described in one sense as the distancing of the body from the building, a gradual extension of the anthropomorphic analogy into wider and wider domains leading insensibly but inexorably to the final "loss" of the body as an authoritative foundation for architecture. The idea of an architectural monument as an embodiment and abstract representation of the human body, […] In this context it is interesting to note a recent return to the bodily analogy by architects all concerned to propose a re-inscription of the body in their work as referent and figurative inspiration. (Vidler, 1996, p. 70)

Ultimately, Vidler concludes that the body as the basis for architecture has always been a myth (1996, p. 74). The other contributions that Vidler makes to the theoretical underpinning of this thesis are the ideas that architecture is devised in response to bodily proportion and that architecture also frames the body. He outlines his discussion through architectural history around the reciprocal relationship between the body, authority, and architecture, and concludes that in deriving power and authority, neither architecture nor the body exist in isolation from each other.

This thesis draws on the arguments made by Tschumi and Vidler regarding the complex relationship between architecture, the body and authority. The presence of the body is intrinsic to architecture's authoritative position, and is also defined by its position relative to architecture. The body can challenge architecture's authority or submit to its control merely by how the body is situated. Neither the body nor architecture can contrive authority without the presence of the other. As Tschumi writes, "The relationship is more subtle and moves beyond the question of power,

beyond the question of whether architecture dominates events, or vice versa. The relationship, then, is as symmetrical as the ineluctable one between guard and prisoner, hunter and hunted" (1996, p. 202). This symmetrical relationship is ripe for further examination and this thesis will do so through investigating performance works through the theoretical lens established in Tschumi and Vidler's work.

1.3.2 A Short-Circuiting Method: Tschumi and Vidler

The method employed in this thesis is developed from a series of post-structuralist "Short Circuit" texts by the Slovenian theorist Slavoj Žižek (1949–). This short-circuiting method will be used in order to bring Tshcumi's and Vidler's attempts to expand architectural theory to deal with the living, breathing body together with examples of performing arts that may expand, extend and shed new light on their writing. Žižek's short-circuiting method involves crossing wires that wouldn't normally cross; for example, crossing a major text with a minor text or work of art. Žižek proposes that this short-circuiting method brings new readings to existing texts (2006, p. 2). This can be seen in a number of Žižek's works, with probably the most prominent example being his edited book *Everything You Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Too Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)* (1992). Immediately, the reader is introduced to the short circuit that Žižek is employing in this book—a short circuit of Jacques Lacan's work, the major work, with Hitchcock's films, the minor work. It is important to note that when Žižek refers to either work being 'major' or 'minor', it does not imply differing levels of significance than the other; rather, that in the short-circuiting process, one work or text is nominated as 'major' so that it may be short circuited by the text or work that is nominated as minor.

In this thesis, the performances are the minor works that are used to short circuit the two architectural theory texts, the major works. This thesis does not look at any one performance work in great detail; rather, it examines specific details of performance works, including small sections of text or dialogue between characters, descriptions of the set, and properties set out by the playwright, visual analysis of the production design and comments by playwrights and/or creative realisers of the work. For this reason, the performance works are used as the critical elements required to short circuit the two architectural essays. As such, the two essays are examined in detail through the case study performances, and it is a central purpose of this thesis to draw new readings of these texts via short circuiting them through the

case study performances.

1.3.3 A Set of Performances Used To Short Circuit Architectural Theory

The performance works analysed in this thesis include *Stockholm* (2007) by Briony Lavery; *Boy Girl Wall* (2010) by The Escapists; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c. 1596) by William Shakespeare; *The Homecoming* (1964), *One for the Road* (1984) and *Ashes to Ashes* (1996) by Harold Pinter (there are other Pinter works mentioned throughout the thesis but these are not analysed in any great depth); and *Being Harold Pinter* (2008) by The Belarus Free Theatre. The case study performances used in this thesis will provide insight into depictions of bodies dealing with architecture as authority in a variety of different ways—mimicking architecture, battling against architecture, reforming architecture and even in one case submitting to architecture's authority. The observation of different ways of dealing with architecture as authority will be used to provide new ways of understanding the body, architecture and authority within the disciplines of architecture and scenography. This thesis does not seek to affirm a definitive answer to the absence of the body that has been identified in architectural theory; rather, it intends to build on existing theory and arrive at new insights that might inform points for further research.

1.4 Definitions

A number of terms repeatedly appear in this thesis, all of which are open to a variety of different definitions, and the following sets out to define them in the context of this research. In particular, this thesis draws on literature from both disciplines of drama and architecture. Although these two disciplines share similar terminology and language, they do not always express the same meaning in terms of theory, especially when it comes to the question of bodies.

BODY/BODIES

The terms 'the body' or 'bodies' are central to this thesis. Bodies are sometimes the idealised or symbolic representations of bodies referenced in architecture. There are also instances where 'bodies' or specific bodies are identified throughout the thesis.

IDEAL BODY

'The ideal body' is the simplified and universal body currently portrayed in architecture discourse. This has been cited as being a problematic way of framing discussions around bodies because it is too broad and does not acknowledge the complexity of individual and unique bodies (Imrie, 2003, p. 56).

ABJECT BODY

Abjection has many alternate definitions—of being cast off, being wretched or contemptible, and of being extremely unpleasant. In this thesis, the abject body is the 'real' body, the body that hasn't been idealised in classicist ideology, the body that poses a threat to architecture. The abject body is, as Dorita Hannah writes,

> the body of this (anti) architecture, rather than the proportioned ideal of classicism, the rational ordering form of modernism, or even the mutilated corpus of post-modernism, could be an uncertain polluted body whose abject interior constantly threatens to erupt through an obscured surface. This abject body is also a performative body that is unclean, untameable and improper. As a body of uncontainable matter it oozes, bleeds, leaks and defecates; natural forms of purification and therefore clarification. (2003, p. 12)

In "Architecture Dismembered", Vidler elaborates in detail on the bodies described in this quote by Hannah. In the case study performances in this thesis, the bodies of classicism, modernity and post-modernity in architecture are all challenged by real, abject bodies. Simply put, the abject body is a body that does not conform to these idealised and controlled bodies projected onto architecture—they are real. In many cases in this thesis, the performers' bodies are seen as abject to the architectural settings in which they are placed.

SET DESIGN & SCENOGRAPHY

The term 'set design' is used to refer to the setting in which the production has been designed in terms of its scenery and properties. The set design can be devised by a professional designer, by amateurs, or by creatives who would not normally work within the medium of set design or scenography. The term 'scenography' has a far broader set of meanings to do with aesthetic, political and ideological discourses underpinning decisions made in the set design.

ARCHITECTURE & ARCHITECTURAL SPACE

Architecture and architectural space are spaces that are deliberately organised and constructed, both physically and culturally. Lefebvre describes this as "inscribed space" (1974, p. 46), and Tschumi as "program" or programmed space (1996, p. 116). Architectural space is space that is designed in such a way as to dictate behaviours and physical processes. This could include how to move in a space (to walk quietly, quickly, loudly, slowly, etc.); how to behave; and what events can occur within a space. Architecture as a discipline borrows these definitions from philosophy, geography and sociology. There is limited literature within architecture itself that deals with space. Drama as a discipline has developed a greater depth of understanding and definition for the meaning of space, to the point of creating taxonomies of space in the theatre that is written about by a number of authors. For example, Christopher Balme, in *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*, describes these spaces as follows: lucid space, the space between the actor and the audience; diegetic space, the space that exists in the text and is not visible to the audience; and mimetic space, the physical space that is visible to the audience and mimes reality (Balme 2008, 50).

MIMETIC SET DESIGN

While there will be no exploration of this suggested taxonomy of space in the theatre, it is important to define mimetic space, as this is explored through several of the productions discussed in the case studies, including *Stockholm, The Homecoming, One for the Road*and *Ashes to Ashes* that utilise mimetic space as part of their production aesthetic. In these plays, the mimetic space is directly representing architectural space through sets and properties, creating spaces that intentionally mimic known architectural spaces on the stage. Throughout this thesis, 'representational architecture' is used to refer to this mimetic space, particularly in these case study plays.

AUTHORITY

Authority is describes where one entity exerts power over another. In this particular thesis that definition applies to the perceived authority that architecture possesses over the bodies of its inhabitants. Drawing from Tschumi's work, this authority channels and constrains bodies, controlling movement and actions. It is an

authority that attempts to purify and contain the body.

PERFORMANCE

Performance is a broad term for playing out a role. Performance takes on many forms, in the case of this thesis the forms include dance, traditional western theatre, performance art and improvised DIY forms of theatre. Architecture itself performs a role within society and this is very much the case, where the scenery in the play *Stockholm,* which is examined in this thesis, is a performer on stage playing the character, Us.

THEATRE

Theatre in this thesis describes the western establishment of theatre where performances are negotiated through constructed narratives and there is a prescribed relationship between the audience and performers. This established form of theatre is manifested in the way that theatre architecture and buildings are developed, creating highly inscribed spaces.

1.5 Thesis Outline

The thesis is set out in a traditional manner. This first chapter has explained the background to the thesis and how I arrived at the research question. It has introduced the two main theoretical texts that will be used in the thesis—Tschumi's "The Violence of Architecture" and Vidler's "Architecture Dismembered". The introduction has also listed all of the performances that will be analysed throughout the thesis, and briefly outlined the method for the study and the application of Žižek's post-structuralist theory of short circuiting as a method for a critical reading of a text. The introduction has also provided definitions of the key terms utilised throughout the thesis.

In Chapter 2, the theoretical positioning of the thesis is defined. This is executed through a brief review of existing literature on the body, and the place of the body in set design, scenography, and stagings of architecture in performance, as defined above. The theoretical position then carefully dissects the two underpinning essays to set up the theory around the concept of authority over the body through architecture. From this analysis, the three themes found in Vidler's essay—1) the sense that the environment as a whole is endowed with bodily or at least organic

characteristics; 2) the notion that building *is* a body of some kind; and 3) the idea that the building embodies some states of the body or, more importantly, states of mind based on bodily sensation—are brought to the fore as the basis for the structure of the case studies.

Chapter 3 discusses the method for the thesis in detail, including Žižek's concept of short circuiting and how it is applied in this thesis. Vidler's three methods in which architecture references or forms a basis for design from the body are discussed and are used to organise the case studies for this thesis. The various methods for analysing the case study performance works are also discussed, and include textual analysis of scripts; visual analysis of production design; existing literature reviews; and comments by the creators of the works.

The subsequent three chapters then discuss the case study performances under Vidler's three themes. The first theme, discussed in Chapter 4, refers to the movement in architecture commonly referred to as "bio mimicry", where a building mimics biological functions of the body; it is explored through the play *Stockholm* by Briony Lavery.

Chapter 5 focuses on the second theme drawn from Vidler's text, which is explored through *Boy Girl Wall* by The Escapists and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare, and particularly through scenes from both of these plays where a performer's body is used to represent a wall or other aspects of architecture.

Chapter 6 examines the third and last theme drawn from "Architecture Dismembered", where a building might embody some bodily sensation, such as sickness or sadness. This is most often the case in war-affected cities where important civic buildings are damaged or in disrepair. The building then embodies the sickness of the state or the people who attach meaning to that building. This theme is discussed through a number of works, but primarily focuses on Harold Pinter's plays, *The Homecoming, Ashes to Ashes* and *One for the Road*, and the Belarus Free Theatre's production of *Being Harold Pinter*. This last theme draws more on the political associations of architecture and how architecture casts its authority over the body through oppressive states of mind, torture and bodily sensations.

From analysing these plays in relation to Vidler's categories for the body and architecture, three points for furthering Tschumi's and Vidler's work are identified and drawn out for discussion in Chapter 7. This work points back to concepts that are identified in the contextual review, but extends them as a method of building on existing architectural theory. The first point for discussion directly builds on Vidler's essay, extending his existing theory on uncanny sensation brought about by the presence of abject bodies. In this section of the discussion, the presence of the abject body as a central visual element in the theatre evokes the sensation of the 'uncanny', building on Vidler's notion of the uncanny and "the return of the repressed" in architecture (1996, p. 69). The second item for discussion that emerges from the study is the problem of the moving body, which is identified as problematic to architecture in both Tschumi's and Vidler's work because of how movement of the body contests the authority of architecture, overthrowing its desire for a static, two-dimensional body. The third point derived from the analysis of the case studies is that bodies, as agents themselves, are capable of reciprocally constructing space,s and places a discussion of the potential visual meaning expressed in the theatre through the Do It Yourself (DIY) aesthetic in production design. This section discusses how the absence of architecture on the stage places emphasis on the body. Doritah Hannah describes this as an 'anti-architecture', where the absence of defined architectural space provides a visual method for subverting the authority of architecture. This discussion relates to a greater emphasis on the presence of the performer's body and a rejection of authoritarian structures through mimetic theatre sets.

In the final chapter, the themes of the thesis are synthesised and concluded. The thesis concludes with how the short circuiting of Tschumi's and Vidler's texts through performance works have proffered new readings of architecture, the body and authority in relation to both architectural and scenographic theory.

Chapter 2: Contextual Review

As a broad introduction to the concepts surrounding architecture, the body and authority in performance, the following literature review examines how the concepts identified in the introduction emerge in performance and performance studies. The first section identifies areas where the mimetic architecture of the box set exerts authority over the body, particularly in relation to gender. The works cited in this section are primarily concerned with representations of architecture on stage, rather than the architecture of the whole theatre, or architecture beyond the theatre. The focus is on criticism of representations of architecture in the mimetic theatre set, and the motivations for practitioners to use representational sets as part of their effort to re-represent relationships between body, architecture and authority. There is specific discussion of problematic inscriptions of gender in the mimetic set, especially sets that mimic domestic architecture. The mimetic set has received the most criticism through the lens of gender, although it has also been criticised through the lens of inscription, race and ability. The literature discussed here looks exclusively at gender and domesticity in the mimetic theatre set. This is followed by a discussion of how a range of set design, scenography and theatre space theorists think the body, and other types of depictions of the body on stage, can inform and define space in the absence of the prescriptive theatre set.

The next section of this chapter will introduce architectural theory of the body in detail and how it relates to this study of the performances and performance theory.

2.1 Limitations of the Mimetic Set

Because the mimetic set became so predominant in the 20th century, its use in mimicking architectural space was seen as fundamental to theatre's appeal to audiences, and much of the literature on spatial arrangements in theatre makes comments on mimetic space (McAuley, 1998; Diamond, 2001; Chaudhuri, 1998; Browne, 2003; Scolnicov, 1996; Balme, 2008; Tompkins, 2006). By representing the 'real' off-stage places in the theatre, the mimetic set is able to arouse visual memories in the spectator. It can solicit the ideals and prejudices that audience members already possess, as these ideals are often inscribed in architectural space

outside of the theatre. It can make manifest the structures and manipulations of daily existence, drawing out hidden influences of historical conditioning of architecture and perhaps even inciting the possibilities for change (Balme, 2008, p. 53). When the on-stage narrative relates to the off-stage space that the audience belongs to, the audience is able to interpret everything on their own culturally prescribed terms, contributing their own memories of space (Brown, 2003. p. 54).

Literature on theatrical space offers three streams of thought on the functioning and politics of mimetic space. One subscribes to the naturalist, representative, stage, as it is able to transfer recognition from the dramatist to the audience, delivering discovery and revelation in a purely hermeneutic order (Chaudhuri 1998, p. 17). However, other critical writings propose that the rigid mimetic set is boring in its reproduction of life on stage. This second stream of thought argues that the mimetic set limits the presence of imagined space, confining the audience to the single narrative portrayed by the production (Chaudhuri 1998, p. 21) and the prescription attached to spaces that mimic architecture. The third situates the mimetic set as a medium for embodying politically problematic ideas about gender, race and class, and makes them seem natural (Tompkins, 2006, p. 7)

2.1.1 Familiarity Embodied in the Realist Set

The emphasis throughout early to late modernity on detailed representations of domestic settings (fourth wall removed or the box set) set up a strangely voyeuristic relationship between the audience and actors, as the audience sit in the dark looking into the often secret routines actors play out in those familiar private, domestic spaces (McAuley, 2000; Diamond, 2001; Chaudhuri, 1998; Brown, 2003; Scolnicov, 1996; Balme, 2008). The majority of mimetic spaces work by idealising the real world, as though nothing in the real world is in need of any significant change (McAuley, 2000; Diamond, 2001; Chaudhuri, 1998; Brown, 2003; Scolnicov, 1996; Balme, 2008). The most common domestic space used in modern Western theatre is the living room. Representations of this space often portray it as a refuge from the untamed outside world as well as the place where identities are defined, ideologies fought and defended, and territorial wars declared and won. The reluctance for Western writers to move out of the living room and write about the spaces where

some of the important struggles of life are lived out shows their inability to tackle issues central to daily life (Balme 2008, p. 57). The representational set is only partially visible; the dramatist can choose what they want to display to the spectator (Chaudhuri 1998, p. 19). This manipulation of space through mimetic production design is at the centre of criticism of representational theatre sets.

2.1.2 Rigid, Boring, Realist Set

The limitations of the realist set have been identified in a number of texts, which nominate various reasons for rejecting it (e.g. Baugh, 2005; Brocket, Mitchell & Hardberger. 2010; Howard, 2009; McKinney & Butterworth, 2009). The naturalistic set originated in the 19th century with the rise of the cultural appeal toward scientific logic and authenticity (Brocket, Mitchell & Hardberger. 2010 p. 113). This drove a desire for detailed representation of 'real' spaces in the theatre. In the earlier 20th century, set designers such as Appia, Gordon Craig, Luybov Popova, Vsevolod Meyerhold, and Schlemmer were shifting the focus in the theatre from idealised representations of architectural space to the presence of the body on the stage (Baugh, 2013). The body for the stage proposed by these set designers was mapped and measured as a near "biomechanical" (Tschumi, 1996, p. 127) designed element for the stage.

This move away from detailed mimetic, realist sets was undoubtedly also influenced by reducing budgets for productions that was further compounded by World War I (Baugh, 2013, p. 67). However, freeing the stage from the rigid and bulky realist set also allowed for new creative workings and a new approach to visual and aural effects on the stage (Baugh, 2013, p. 63). A key motivator in moving away from the traditional theatre set was the flexibility of simpler, abstracted sets that allowed for them to be manipulated and altered throughout the development of the work. The designer then worked alongside the director and actors in rehearsals and could continually change and improve the theatre set as the performance developed (Baugh, 2013 p. 61). Further to this, sceonographers such as Josef Svoboda sought to design sets that engaged all of the senses, evolving scenography to be something more than just a visual element on the stage. Svoboda was also designing sets that moved and could interact with the actors on the stage (Baugh, 2013 p. 61). In Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto (1908) for the theatre, he called for a

radical shift away from theatre sets that mimicked familiar domestic spaces. Marinetti argued that challenging the conventions of traditional scenography, through creating abstract and unfamiliar environments, the theatre would be able to challenge social conventions (Howard, 2009, 142). The problems associated with the realist set's capacity to embody, represent and perpetuate conventional, social norms is expressed in literature concerned with the oppression of race, culture and gender through mimetic theatre sets on the stage.

2.1.2 Politically Problematic Realist Set

Gender and Representations of Domestic Architecture in Theatre Sets

Some authors, while criticising mimetic space, concede that representational space gives the audience a sense of home, and that a relationship between the audience and the actor is established through this replication of a known space. Even if the audience realises that the space is in need of some adjustments to better serve its inhabitants, it is still a fully recognisable space: a known, a given (Chaudhuri 1998, 92). The domestic space is also perceived as a feminine space. Two texts that make specific reference to assimilations between the female body and domestic architecture are Elin Diamond's book *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theater* (1997) and Una Chaudhuri's book *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama* (1998). These texts both point to an established argument about femininity and its associations with domesticity, which has also been discussed by architectural, film and visual art theorists. Diamond also writes about imitation in the theatre and its ties to femininity. She challenges mimesis, arguing that realist mimetic representations of space tie into traditional ideologies of femininity and the desire to imitate masculinity: the real belonging to the masculine, and the mimetic belonging to the feminine (1997, p. 11). Hilde Heynen writes in the same vein, placing the mimetic in opposition to the rational and associated with the feminine, although she suggests mimesis as a tactic for subversion through the double gesture of assimilation and displacement (Heynan, 2005, p. 6). This double gesture of mimesis is of particular interest to this study. Instead of thinking of this device as objectifying women (or the subject), the assimilation of the body with architecture can be thought of as the subjectification of architecture, establishing the notion of a reciprocal

relationship between the body, architecture and authority.

2.1.3 Architectural Authority over the Body in Dramatic Space

Together, these criticisms have led many performance studies commentators to examine the power, authority, and oppression embodied in the mimetic, realist set. Literature on body, stage and space by Hannah (2003), McCauley (2000) and Tompkins (2006) all look at the authoritative nature of architecture over the body in the theatre. For these theorists, they challenge the notion that theatre stages can be thought of as shells that require filling by actors, props and sets, instead proffering that the theatre venue is always filled with more than the current production (Tompkins 2006, p. 3). Australian academic Gay McAuley is one of the key writers about theatrical stage space. She makes the point that space does not need to be created through physical sets and props. Rather, she argues, the mere physical presence of actors on a bare stage is enough to represent space. The number and position of the exits, the lighting and the occupation of space by the actors on stage is sufficient to establish spatial demarcation (McAuley, 2000, p. 29). Hannah also writes along these lines, describing that the empty stage denies "a purely visual apprehension of built space, and suggesting a profound interiority, the black-box posits a new way of regarding the body in space" (2003, p. 14). Hannah goes on to describe that the empty stage also presents a space that is infinite in its undefined manner; that "the empty space while presenting a poverty of matter also represents excess, that evasive, embracing mat(t)er which threatens to consume" (Hannah, 2003, p. 11).

McAuley's work on the difference between stage theatre and site specific theatre elaborates more specifically on the authority of architecture over performance through the 'institutionalisation' of theatre "as a means of controlling the potentially destabilising effects that may occur if fiction is allowed to contaminate the real" (2005, p. 28). McAuley references Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* to support her argument on the politicised control that the physical space of theatre has over performance; she writes that "in contemporary society dominated space has become excessively dominant through the part played by the military, the state and political power" (McAuley, 2005, p. 29). Theatre buildings, among other civic buildings, are

funded by governments and are representative of the power and authority of the institution or of a nation state. In his essay "The Architectural Parallax", Žižek also describes the space of the theatre as a public space that is privately controlled (Žižek, 2010, p. 263). In a similar vein, Stephen Di Benedetto writes in his text on scenography that site-specific theatre is simply a return (intentionally or unintentionally) to Medieval theatre where performances did not take place in a formal theatre building but in found spaces (Di Benedetto, 2013, p. 21). However, the body has always been present in performance, and, as such, the presence of the body is not a reference to a historical style of performance. Rather, the body has been repressed by design and technology throughout modernity and the contemporary performances studied in this thesis demonstrate the return of a repressed body.

2.1.4 Contextualising This Research within Existing Literature on Scenography and Set Design

The observations of these theorists led to a renewed interest in set design, scenography, and the symbolic aspects of theatre stages and spaces in the first part of the 21st century. As noted in the introduction, the sub-discipline of set design, or scenography, emerged in late-19th century and early-20th century. Scenographers such as Appia, Gordon Craig, Svoboda. Schlemmer, Popova, Meyerhold and Kantor, among others, all sought to transcend the rigidity of realist sets. In doing so, they worked toward including the performer's body as an element of the scenery on stage—from Kantor's 'bio-object', where the body was considered as an animated object, to Gordon Craig's concept of the Über-Marionette, where the performer's body was treated as a designed element on the stage, and Schlemmer's Triadisches Ballet in which the dancers' bodies were treated as an artistic medium in geometric form (McKinney & Butterworth, 2009, p. 33). Tschumi also makes reference to the biomechanical body employed in the set designs by Popova and Meyerhold (1996, p. 213). There is a clear parallel that can be drawn from the way that these designers objectified bodies in their work and the way that the discipline of architecture aims to simplify, and, by doing so, control the body. Where scenographers differ from architects in this treatment of the body is that they do so intentionally through a process of working with the performers' bodies, whereas architects objectify the body for convenience and as such it is not so much of a deliberate act.

Today, there are a number of new scenographers and scenography theorists who seek to critically analyse the body in scenography and to re-inscribe the body in the theatre. Among these are Doritah Hanna, who trained as an architect and has an interest in set design, scenography, and performance. We are similar in that her background and training is, like mine, in architecture, not theatre; thus, her focus is on set design and scenography, rather than more in-depth theatre history, theory, or analytic methods. This is important for this thesis, which focuses not just on set design as properties, but on scenography, and cultural meanings of body in space, which gets into social, political, and ideological readings that are embodied in theatre sets. Further to this, a new generation of critical theorists, such as McAuley and Tompkins, who—although not set designers or architects—focus their aesthetic analysis on set design, scenography and what the end use of space is representing in the theatre, and how, and what it says about bodies, authority and architecture. McAuley and Tompkin's work in particular explores the potential for subversion of this power relationship between the body and architecture through performance.

2.1.5 Architectural Theory in Performance Studies

The only study found in the literature that included a detailed analysis of architecture, the body and authority was Matthew Pollard's journal article on Heinrich Von Kleist's play, *Penthesilea* (1908), titled "Reading and Writing the Architecture of the Body in Kleist's *Penthesilea*" (2003 pp. 365-391). *Penthesilea* is a German tragedy based on the mythological Amazonian Queen, Penthesilea, and the mutual passion and, ultimately, destruction she shares with her enemy Achilles. Pollard's paper focuses on what he describes as the long-neglected analogies that Kleist draws between the body and architecture. Pollard draws on the notion of the body as temple and the 'idolisation' of the body through architecture, which is discussed in Vidler's critiques of the idealised body that informs architecture. Vidler describes the idolisation of the temple in "Architecture Dismembered" when he writes, "Such an analogy, indeed, took on more than a metaphorical meaning: in a real sense the figural expression of anthropomorphic form, from the column to the plan and facade, buildings were bodies, temples the most perfect of all, as were cities, the seat of the body social and politic" (1996, p. 74).

Pollard primarily analyses the text of *Penthesilea,* a play that has been described as 'unplayable' due to the physical settings that the narrative is dependent upon (Pollard, 2003, p. 389), where the reading of architecture is one of a structuralist dialectical—that is, exterior and interior relate to male and female and so on. This is where a more detailed presentation of architecture and architectural theory would contribute a more complex understanding of the body, architecture and authority. This is a further gap in the literature that this thesis will contribute to through applying architectural theory to performance studies.

2.2 Theoretical Positioning

2.2.1 Introduction to Theoretical Positioning

The following introduces the two architectural theory essays that will be examined and potentially extended in this thesis by placing them in relation to representations of bodies in performance, as described in the introduction.

2.2.2 Introduction to Tschumi's "The Violence of Architecture"

As noted in the introduction, Tschumi is a pioneer of deconstructivist architecture, both in practice and theory. His work argues for an 'event based' architecture, where architecture is designed as a response to human activity instead of being used as a blunt instrument used to dictate and control human activity. The main elements of his theory that are relevant here are his criticisms of architecture as an authoritative agent and his acknowledgement of the authority that is shared and reciprocated between the body and architecture. Neither the body nor architecture can derive authority without the other.

Tschumi is an established authority in the field of architecture as a practising architect, academic and theorist. In his published collection of essays between 1975 and 1990 titled *Architecture and Disjunction* (1996), Tschumi analyses and theorises on topics that have been central to architecture, particularly to postmodern architectural discourse. This thesis focuses on the essay "The Violence of Architecture" in which Tschumi successfully draws together a theoretical relationship of the body, architecture and authority through the metaphor of an architect curating a performance. He writes that, "The architect designs the set,

writes the script, and directs the actors... Such were Meyerhold's biomechanics, acting through Popova's stage sets, where the characters' logic played with and against the logic of their dynamic surroundings" (1996, p. 127). Tschumi's writing is evocative but it also synthesises a number of pertinent concepts to this thesis.

Tschumi explains throughout the essay that his use of the term violence is not a violence of bodily torture or emotional torment, "but a metaphor for the intensity of a relationship between individuals and their surrounding spaces" (1996, p. 218). Here, Tschumi points out that space is framed by both architecture and the positioning of the body; one cannot create spatial agency without the other. However, later in the same paragraph, he ponders whether the body or the building creates the architecture; he suggests, "a genuine movement of bodies made into an architectural solid. Or the reverse: it is a solid that forcibly channels the movement of bodies" (Tschumi 1996, p. 123). The important contribution Tschumi makes in this essay is that the architectural act is a performance that cannot be carried out without the building in the presence of the body and vice versa.

Tschumi's accomplished writing ties together the seemingly divergent themes in this study. His multidisciplinary approach brings with it unique insights and criticisms of modern architecture, especially his focus on the mobile (moving) body in contrast to the static, immobile body presented by modern architecture. This mobile body is discussed in detail in Chapter 7. Tschumi describes the body that is repressed and controlled by architecture and defines this repressed body as a critical element to the analysis presented in this chapter, because it is through the actor's body that this repressive nature of architecture is overcome. Violence is an act disguised by many forms; for architecture, violence is enacted by its very existence. As Tschumi writes, "There is no architecture without action, no architecture without events, no architecture without program. By extension, there is no architecture without violence" (1996, p. 125). The violence of architecture is a reciprocal act between the body and the building. The violence enacted between the body and architecture is not one of physical harm, but rather coercion between one body and another. It is the manipulation of one form by the other.

2.2.3 Introduction to Vidler's "Architecture Dismembered"

As noted in the introduction, Vidler is an architectural historian, critic and theorist who has made a substantial contribution to architectural discourse over a 50-

year career. The main element of his theory relevant here is how architecture as a discipline has historically treated the body. In particular, his commentary on the gradual distancing from the physical, three-dimensional body of architectural thought—where it has continued to distance itself from dealing with the complexities and variations of the human body.

The conceptual framework for this thesis is developed from a close reading of the chapter "Architecture Dismembered" in *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (1996), which references Freud's description of the "unheimlich" [unhomely] and the uncanny. Vidler's book consists of a series of essays grouped under three themes; houses, bodies and spaces. Under the bodies theme, there are four essays (chapters), of which "Architecture Dismembered" is the first. The book investigates instances of the uncanny in architecture through examples of buildings as well as architecture in novels, films and performances. It uncovers the uncanny in houses (especially haunted ones), cities, civic buildings and within the interior. In the introduction to the book, Vidler writes that,

> If I feel a personal uncanny in the face of such a repression of the political, it is perhaps for this reason: that, within many of the projects that pretend to a radical disruption of cultural modes of expression, there still lurks the ghost of avant-garde politics, one that is proving difficult to exorcise entirely. (1996, 2)

Vidler asserts that the body as the basis for architecture has long been a myth. In his work, the framework for analysis is drawn from psychoanalysts—namely, Freud and Lacan—even though Lacan suggested that psychoanalysis fails to consider the mechanical and biological aspects of what a body could be (Žižek, 2008. p. 11). This research aims to identify some of the shortcomings of understanding a complex body through psychoanalysis in architectural theory and proposes alternative methods for theorising a complex body for architecture through performance studies. In "Architecture Dismembered", Vidler describes the affective relationship between the body and architecture as 'uncanny', drawing from Freud's theory that the uncanny is caused by a prior repression and unexpected return.

In "Architecture Dismembered", Vidler notes that the body has always had an influence over architecture, but it has been kept in a repressed state; he writes

as Freud noted with regard to the feeling of the uncanny—by the apparent

> 'return' of something presumed lost but now evidently active in the work. In this context it would be, so to speak, the return of the body into an architecture that had repressed its conscious presence that would account for our sense of disquiet. (Vidler, 1996, p. 70)

It is worth briefly discussing Vidler's use of the Freudian term "return of the repressed" and the sensation of the uncanny. For Vidler, the body has never been lost to architecture but is has been repressed, abstracted, muted, cut and dissected by architecture. The return of this repressed body is unexpected and causes sensations of the uncanny in terms of the authority embodied in architecture. This sense of the uncanny comes through, as Žižek describes, "the utopia enacted in architecture [which] can also be a conservative utopia of regained hierarchical order" (2010, p. 214). This same argument is proffered by Tschumi who describes the authoritative exchange between the body and architecture as symmetrical and reciprocated.

Vidler references Tschumi's architectural work in "Architecture Dismembered" in which he describes the reciprocity between Tschumi's architecture and the body. He describes the experience of Tschumi's architecture, writing that, "the owner of a conventional body is undeniably placed under threat as the reciprocal distortions and absences *felt* by the viewer, in response to the reflected projection of bodily empathy, operate almost viscerally on the body" (Vidler, 1996 p. 69) Vidler's assertion of a "bodily empathy" in Tschumi's architecture is expressed in "The Violence of Architecture". Vidler continues to write about Tschumi's work, among others, describing the radical departure of bodily analogy employed in his architecture.

> In this context it is interesting to note a recent return to the bodily analogy by architects as diverse as Coop Himmelblau, Bernard Tschumi and Daniel Libeskind, all concerned to propose a re-inscription of the body in their work as referent and figurative inspiration. But this renewed appeal to corporeal metaphors is evidently based on a "body" radically different from that at the centre of the humanist tradition. (Vidler, 2002, 69)

This "radically different body" is a unique insight in Vidler's assessment of postmodern architecture in "Architecture Dismembered".

Vidler further elaborates on this idea of the uncanny sensation between the body and architecture in the postmodern, proposing that the sense of disquiet is derived from the mutilated and damaged body as the basis for postmodern architecture. Hence, the title of his essay, "Architecture Dismembered", which

suggests from the outset the violence (as Tschumi describes) enacted onto the body by postmodern architecture. This dismembered body in architecture is also referenced in Hannah's work where she describes the mutilated corpus of postmodern architecture in the theatre (2003, p. 67). This attempt by postmodern architects to reinscribe the body back into architecture by cutting and chopping is criticised by Vidler where he identifies that, "On first inspection, this cutting of the architectural body might appear to be no more than an obvious reversal of tradition, an almost too literal transcription of the idea of 'dismembering architecture'" (Vidler, 1996, p. 69). The central criticism Vidler has is how architecture has historically and continues to deal with the body as a controllable element of design.

While this is a valid reflection on the absence of the body in modern and postmodern architecture, Vidler's analysis relies on psychoanalysis, falling back on an exploration of phenomena through the mind and not the body, and there is a correlation between studies of corporeality and psychoanalysis where Freud and especially Lacan relate the ego to embodiment. Of course, the intention of the current study is not to criticise psychoanalysis, but to offer a new reading of architecture, authority, and the body, and to suggest that the relationship between these entities is, instead complex and reciprocal. The point is that while Vidler develops a substantial critique of the way that architecture references the body to derive authority, through the use of psychoanalytic theory to support his criticism, there is no consideration of the real, physical and divergent human body in his work. He makes suggestions towards this reciprocal relationship between the body and architecture but he stops short of describing what this more complex relationship between the body, architecture and authority might actually look like. The aim of this thesis is to build on his theory by investigating the relationship between the body, architecture and authority through performance and performance studies.

The expansion of Vidler's comments in this thesis will be derived by re-reading his theory in relation to performance works that seem—in my analysis, of course, not in the performers' intentions—to relate to the three categories that Vidler identifies as the ways in which the body relates to architecture. Vidler identified these three themes as part of his broad historical enquiry into the bodily analogy in architecture in this his essay "Architecture Dismembered". These three categories

will become themes under which the selected case study performance works will be analysed. These themes, identified on page 71 of "Architecture Dismembered" by Vidler, are as follows:

1. "The sense that the environment as a whole is endowed with bodily or at least organic characteristics, by which Vidler is referring to buildings that mimic functions, or visual or physical characteristics, of the body." This is where a building's function might mimic the body's respiratory system, or functions of the skin; in architecture, this approach to designing a building is called biomimicry. However, what Vidler is describing here could also be very simply described by the common association of the domestic kitchen to the heart—as in the kitchen is the 'heart' of the home. Here, there is some cultural connotation that the house accommodates a circulatory system for which it requires a heart. This bodily analogy to architecture has a long and deep history and Vidler points to many examples of this in architectural history throughout the essay.

2. "The notion that a building *is* a body of some kind," by which Vidler is referring to association of a building to a subjective entity—a mother or a father, for example. In this theme, Vidler is describing the cultural phenomenon of architects or building owners or users attaching subjectivity to a building to the point where it is a living, breathing body. In the essay, Vidler points to a number of examples where this analogy emerged throughout architectural history. His examples highlighted architects giving life to their own buildings in particular.

3. "The idea that a building embodies some states of the body or, more importantly, states of mind based on bodily sensation." In this theme, Vidler is referring to buildings that might express joy or sorrow, buildings that celebrate, and buildings that deteriorate and age in the same way as the human body. This is where a building might become sick or sad, which is most often the case in war-affected cities where important civic buildings are damaged or in disrepair. The building then embodies the sickness of the state or the people who attach meaning to that building. Once the building is repaired, or restored and in a sense recovered, the healing of this building can exude a sense of wellbeing to the building's occupants or the people who inhabit the city that surrounds it. The examples that Vidler pointed to in this category were modern and post modern examples of architecture.

2.3 Building on Existing Theory on the Body, Architecture and Authority through Performance Studies

The review of the literature demonstrates that performance studies have a greater focus on the body than architectural theory, and, as such, have much to offer architectural theory in the identified gap around literature concerning the body. The literature review also demonstrates that the abstraction of the body by architects has been criticised by theorists such as Anthony Vidler in the "Architecture Dismembered" and Bernard Tschumi in "The Violence of Architecture", who argue that it is time for architects to consider complex bodies, gendered bodies and bodies beyond the arbitrary standardised proportions that currently mandate architectural design. In other words, architects and architectural theorists themselves call for, and would appreciate, new insights and extensions, including from performance and performance studies, on how architecture should consider complex, physical bodies. The aim of this thesis, then, will be to build on existing literature to develop a more complex theoretical understanding of the body in architectural theory.

Specifically, the findings from this research will expand on Vidler's discussion of the body around the following:

1. Living, breathing abject bodies;
2. Mobile bodies; and
3. Bodies as agents themselves, reciprocally constructing spaces and places.

These three points clearly emerge from the short circuiting of the performances that are studied in this thesis with the aforementioned architectural theory. From these three points, it is a clear finding from this thesis that performance has potential to expand and offer new areas for examination to architectural theory and theorists on the body, architecture and authority.

The following chapter introduces in detail how this thesis works to establish these points at which it could build on architectural theory on the body through examination of performance. It describes the short-circuiting method as identified in Slavoj Žižek's work and how each performance will short circuit the three themes identified by Vidler in "Architecture Dismembered". The next chapter will also elaborate on the methods of analysis for each of the plays selected within each of the themes.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Research methods

This thesis is predominately concerned with building on existing architectural theory on the body via an examination of performance set design and scenography. The qualitative research methods employed involve a mixed-method approach, including identifying case study performances across conventional plays, collaborative performances, and performance art; undertaking a textual analysis of verbal, dramaturgical and visual components of performance texts; and, then, examining how the relation between body, architecture and authority identified via these textual analyses of performances might extend and expand on architectural theory.

3.2 Selection of Case Studies

The research design for this thesis involves investigating the following seven case studies of plays selected for their potential to shed light on body, architecture, and authority: *Stockholm* (2007), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c. 1596), *Boy Girl Wall* (2010), *The Homecoming* (1964), *One for the Road* (1984) *Ashes to Ashes* (1996) and *Being Harold Pinter* (2008). This selection of works came after an initial analysis of a number of works that lead to these plays offering the greatest opportunity for investigation due to the existing academic literature surrounding them. The selection of these plays was derived from my own experiences plays and performances that I had viewed and from works that were suggested to me. Coming from a discipline background in architecture and not performance, has limited the scope of works that could be analysed, but this also leaves room for the applied method and theory to be applied to other performances in the future. Each of these plays are defined as case studies to the research because they are "a unit of human activity embedded in the real world" that act to inform the research question through a range of different types of evidence (Gillham, 2010, p. 1). Case studies generally inform a qualitative method of research (Gillham, 2010,p. 2). The different types of evidence that are collected for each of these case study plays are outlined in the

sections below. As noted in the introduction, this thesis does not look at any one performance work in great detail; rather, it examines specific details of performance works, including small sections of text or dialogue between characters, descriptions of the set and properties set out by the playwright, visual analysis of the production design and comments by playwrights and/or creative realisers of the work. Thus, they are case studies in the sense of looking at multiple cases to investigate a research question, rather than detailed, in-depth analysis of one single case study (Gillham, 2010, p. 1).

The varying styles and eras of performances analysed in this thesis allow for a wide-ranging discussion on the theme of the authority of architecture over the body in performance and how performance works demonstrate the reciprocity of the authority between the body and architecture. The style and genre of these selected works include Elizabethan theatre (*Midsummer Night's Dream*), Naturalist drama (*Pinter's works*), postmodern theatre (*Boy Girl Wall)*, Modernist theatre *(Stockholm),* and activist performance works *(Being Harold Pinter)*. This broad cross section of performance works referred to in this thesis uncovers some interesting points of shared principles in performance that span both time and genre.

3.3 Textual Analysis: Verbal, Dramaturgical, Visual Features of 'Case Study' Performances

As described in Kershaw and Nicholson's book *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance* (2011), research on bodies in performance can be undertaken via a variety of qualitative methods. The authors write that

> the bodies researched are drawn from texts or moving images discovered within archives, observed on stages, seen in photographs or read about in the news. Body centred performance research is certainly not limited to creative practice or traditionally aesthetic 'theatrical' or 'dancing' bodies, and different researchers arrive at their subjects of study from a variety of routes. (2011, p. 215)

This thesis analyses scenographic works through a variety of methods, including textual analysis, visual analysis, analysis of creators' comments and performance reviewers' comments. The focus on visual and performance elements of the play texts will overlay the architectural theory to build on existing literature

concerned with the body, authority and architecture and the identified gap in architectural discourse concerned with a complex understanding of the body.

3.3 The Lens Underpinning the Analysis of the Case Studies

The case studies are examined through the lens of the three themes identified by Anthony Vidler in "Architecture Dismembered". This broad cross section of case studies ensures each of Vidler's themes is thoroughly analysed (Gillham, 2010, p. 5). This thesis employs an interpretivist paradigm where analysis of existing literature and performance works are the basis for this thesis. This research is questioning existing phenomenon and as such the results are emergent theory from this analysis, and not definite answers to a set question arising. This is very much qualitative research that is seeking to only expand on existing critical theory..

3.4 Theme One: The Sense that the Environment as a Whole Is Endowed with Bodily or at Least Organic Characteristics

The first theme, discussed in Chapter 4, is "The sense that the environment as a whole is endowed with bodily or at least organic characteristics" (Vidler, 1996, 71) , and is examined in relation to the play *Stockholm* (2007) by Briony Lavery. In *Stockholm*, the physical set enacts bodily functions and the authority of the architecture over the body is physically direct and acted out by the performers and the set itself.

Specifically, the set mimics bodily functions and characteristics. In this play, the interaction between the body and the architecture is physical and direct, in that the characters have physical contact with the architecture, and the domestic setting in which the play is set in has its own lines within the play.

This play is analysed through a close reading of the script and a visual analysis of the set. The latter is so integral to the performance that it has toured internationally with the play, and the analysis of the set is supported by comments published by Lavery. Visual analysis is utilised in all of the case studies in this thesis and its importance to researching performance works is expressed by Dwight Conquergood, who has lamented the overemphasis on textual analysis in research in the field of drama. He writes that, "the visual/verbal bias of Western regimes of knowledge blinds researchers to meanings that are expressed forcefully through intonation,

silence, body tension, arched eyebrows, blank stares, and other protective arts of disguise and secrecy" (Conquergood, 2013, p. 34). For this reason, there is emphasis placed on a visual analysis of all of the works studied in this thesis.

3.5 Theme Two: The Notion that the Building *Is* a Body of Some Kind

In Chapter 5, two plays are studied in response to Vidler's second theme, "The notion that the building *is* a body of some kind" (Vidler, 1996, p. 71); they are *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c. 1596) by William Shakespeare and *Boy Girl Wall* (2010) by The Escapists. In the second theme, there is an implicit power struggle between the body and architecture that is only revealed through historical research and analysis. In these plays, while the body is used to represent architecture (in particular, a wall), the sense of authority between the body and architecture is a subversive device that is not explicitly expressed to the audience and only found through historical research as well as visual and textual analysis of the works.

In this chapter, the case studies involve the physical performers' bodies being used to represent architecture, becoming an element of the scenography, in performance. These case studies involve very specific instances within each play; in particular, Tom Snout's portrayal of Wall in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Wall played by the solo actor in the contemporary Australian play *Boy Girl Wall*.

By a visual analysis of the positioning of the performers' bodies, a new reading of a reciprocal bodily semiotic expressing the authority embodied in architecture is discovered. The text in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is also studied through a close reading. These two case studies also ignite an initial discussion on physical bodies and architecture in performance, addressing the absence of physical bodies in existing literature. This chapter identifies with broader, social themes of struggles against authority and how these might be overcome or solved. In both of these case studies, the authority is represented by the architecture and a way to come to terms with these struggles is by becoming the architecture itself.

3.6 Theme Three: The Idea that the Building Embodies Some States of the Body or, More Importantly, States of Mind Based on Bodily Sensation

Finally, in Chapter 6, the relationship between the architecture, body and authority is expressed through a metaphor that requires an investigation into symbolic gestures and meaning presented through a textual and visual analysis.

That is, the authority of either the body or architecture is not found through the physical or visual representation of the work. Under this third theme, "The idea that the building embodies some states of the body or, more importantly, states of mind based on bodily sensation" (Vidler, 1996, p. 71), the plays *The Homecoming* (1964), *One for the Road* (1984) and *Ashes to Ashes* (1996) by Harold Pinter (there are other Pinter works mentioned throughout the thesis but these are not analysed in any great depth) and *Being Harold Pinter* (2008) by The Belarus Free Theatre are analysed.

This last theme looks at when architecture represents the political in the theatre. The works analysed here are overtly political, ranging from Pinter's earlier subversive works to his later works that were intentionally written to draw attention to unethical politics of nation states. The analysis of *The Homecoming, One for the Road* and *Ashes to Ashes* are found through a close reading of the plays. This chapter also analyses a play based on Harold Pinter's work by the Belarus Free Theatre, which is, by its very nature, a political act. It is studied through a visual analysis. The analysis of Pinter's work is mostly textual, paying close attention to his script, but also involves analysis of the stage directions in his plays and interpretations of these directions by scenographers. The play by the Belarus Free Theatre is analysed via photographic documentation of their work and reviewers' comments on their live performances. This chapter sheds light on the political agency of architecture in its various representations in performance.

3.4 Analytical Method: Short Circuiting Vidler's Three Themes on the Body and Architecture Via Performances

Short Circuiting

The overarching method for analysis in this thesis is Slavoj Žižek's concept of the 'short circuit' (2006, p. ii) by examining performances in this thesis that are organised under the three themes identified by Anthony Vidler in "Architecture Dismembered". In short, Žižek's theory is to ask, what can we learn about discipline/genre/phenomena 'A' by looking at it through discipline/genre/phenomena 'B'. He largely writes about this concept in the text *Parallax View*. Parallax is an ideal way of describing the short-circuiting method, where it involves looking at one object from various angles. Like looking at a tree from a moving train, the eye is

fixed on the object, but the body is moving, giving the viewer more information about the object, such as it's size, how far away it is from the body, how fast the train is moving and so on. In this thesis, the aim is to look at architecture from through performance studies. From the angle of performance studies, this research aims to uncover ways of seeing and thinking about architecture. This is not about discovering something 'new' but about finding new ways of looking at something that was known to be there all along. In particular to this thesis, it aims to uncover the reciprocal, authoritative relationship between the body and architecture through an analysis of performance works.

Using data drawn from a textual and visual analysis of each performance, to bring it into this specific relationship with architectural theory, a relation that Slavoj Žižek would classify as a short-circuiting of performance theory and architectural theory. Via this short-circuiting method, this thesis identifies points at which each discipline (architecture and performance studies) can inform each other and expand on each other's theories. This final step, in which the architectural theory essays are examined in detail through the case study performances, is central to this thesis, as it encourages new readings of these texts via the short-circuiting method. It is therefore critical to note that while this thesis sits under the discipline of performance studies, its contribution to knowledge is not in performance or performance theory itself, but in architecture and architectural theory and the way in which it struggles to deal with messy, real and moving bodies

Žižek's work has been identified in this thesis not only for his 'short circuiting' method but also for his commentary on the authoritarian arrangement between the body and architecture. In his essay "The Architectural Parallax" (2010, 244–75), he writes that there is an under-explored reciprocal nature of authority embodied in architecture, which "brings us to an unexpected result: it is not only that the fantasy embodied in the mute language of buildings that can articulate the utopia of justice, freedom and equality betrayed by actual social relations; this fantasy can also articulate a LONGING FOR INEQUALITY, for clear hierarchy and class distinctions" (Žižek, 2010, p. 256). For isn't a protest against the political agency represented by architecture simply a desire for an alternative power structure? Žižek's comments on the reciprocity of the power struggle between bodies and architecture are important to this study because he draws on the Freudian concept of the "return of the repressed" in a parallel to Vidler's analysis in "Architecture

Dismembered".

While there is a deeper relevance in Žižek's work to this thesis and its aims, the central use of his writing here is his concept of the 'short circuit.' In the introduction to his book, *Parallax View*, (2006) Žižek poses alternative histories to modern art; in particular, that Cubism was used as a form of 'psychotechnic' torture, and that Walter Benjamin was murdered for his unpublished criticisms of Marxism (Žižek, 2006, p. 1). Both of these alternative histories present a short circuit between two ideological works. The first story presents a short circuit between fine arts, power and torture and the second story short circuits institutionalised ideas of Marxism with a (potentially) unknown manuscript written by Benjamin. If these alternative histories were pursued, then a new understanding of these works, or an understanding we already knew but were unaware of, would be exposed (2006, p. ii). Žižek goes on to describe the short circuit caused by these stories:

> More radically, what the two stories share is that the link they establish is an impossible short circuit of levels which, for structural reasons, can never meet… The illusion on which these two stories rely, that of putting two incompatible phenomena on the same level, is strictly analogous to what Kant called "transcendental illusion," the illusion of being able to use the same language for phenomena which are mutually untranslatable and can be grasped only in a kind of parallax view, constantly shifting perspective between two points between which no synthesis or mediation is possible. Thus there is no rapport between the two levels, no shared space—although they are closely connected, even identical in a way, they are, as it were, on the opposed side of a Moebius strip. (Žižek, 2006, p. 2)

Applying Žižek's theory in this research will 'short circuit' the two architectural theory essays against the seven plays identified in this thesis. In the foreword to Žižek's *Parallax View,* he writes,

> Is not the shock of short circuiting, therefore, one of the best metaphors for a critical reading? Is not one of the most effective critical procedures to cross wires that do not usually touch: to take a major (text, author, notion), and read it in a short-circuiting way through the lens of a "minor" author, text or conceptual apparatus? (2006, p. ii)

In this thesis, the major texts are Tschumi's and Vidler's essays and the minor works are the performance works analysed. In this context, the performances are 'minor' and architecture theory is the 'major', not in sense that one or the other is more or less important, but, as Žižek writes, "'minor' should be understood here in Deleuze's sense: not 'of lesser quality' but marginalized, disavowed by hegemonic

ideology or dealing with a 'lower' less dignified topic" (2006, p. 2). This is especially the case for the Pinter and Shakespeare works analysed in the thesis that are undoubtedly "major" texts in terms of cultural impact and readership in comparison to Vidler's and Tschumi's essays. Rather, they are treated in this thesis as the minor short-circuiting elements because they are not explicitly addressing the central themes of the thesis around the body, architecture and authority. In all of the case study plays, the works explore these themes either subversively or implicitly. The way they present the relationship between architecture, the body and authority present whole new ways to read and understand Vidler's and Tschumi's work and theorise the relationship between the body and architecture both on the stage and in existing architectural discourse. Žižek suggests that "if the minor reference is well chosen, such a procedure can lead to insights to which completely shatter and undermine our common perceptions" (2006, p. 2).

Applying this method from Žižek's work, this thesis attempts to build on existing architectural theory and address the neglected body in architectural discourse by short circuiting architectural theory with case studies of performance works. The performing arts has been chosen as the short-circuiting phenomena of architectural theory and the body because of the broader acknowledgement and focus placed on the body in both practice and theory in the performing arts. The breadth of literature and creative works concerned with the body has much to offer architectural theory and practice in, as Vidler describes, its ongoing abstraction to idealised forms or complete failure to recognise and accommodate the body without manipulating, contorting or abstracting it.

Chapter 4: The Sense that the Environment as a Whole Is Endowed with Bodily or at Least Organic Characteristics

4.1 Introduction to *Stockholm*

Bryony Lavery's play *Stockholm,* devised and written in 2007 for the Hampstead theatre (Lavery, 2008, p. 4), is centred on the relationship between two antagonist characters, Todd and Kali. The analysis for this play comes the production of *Stockholm* by Frantic Assembly. The production was designed by Laura Hopkins. The play analysed in thie chapter was viewed at La Boite Theatre in Brisbane, Australia. The play portrays the couple's relationship as hostile, where both characters are compulsively drawn to each other in a manner that appears absurd to everyone outside of the relationship. The playwright draws an analogy between this type of relationship (one of which we are all aware of?) to the "Stockholm Syndrome". Lavery writes, "This led us to research Stockholm Syndrome and its fascinating bond between victim and aggressor. This relationship is incomprehensible from the outside but perfectly clear from within and seemed to be born from the same climate of fear and potential violence. Stockholm Syndrome seemed to be the world we wanted to explore" (Lavery, 2008, p. 6). This play proffers a clear example of the perceived authority that architecture has over the body and how this authority is aceived through bodily analogy.

To produce the "Stockholm Syndrome" there needs to be three parties; hostages, captors and the authorities. There is an ambiguity in Lavery's Stockholm as to who is the authority. Is it the very few references to mainstream gender roles? The Mother? In this analogy I will argue that the authority is the representational architecture of the set, the house is a character that is introduced in the very last scene named, Us. The hostage is Todd and the captor is Kali. The play's unique set is described as, "a set that provides the perfect contrast between domestic bliss and intrinsic danger" (Lavery, 2008, p. 7) traversing the line, as Bernard Tschumi (1996, p. 134) describes between the violence and pleasure of architecture that the set represents. The animation of the set complements the physical theatricals of the two actors on stage. Throughout the play the set is introduced as a character, Us; it is given a history and subjective qualities. For example, in a scene where Todd is coerced into an unwanted sexual advance—the set blooms flowers from the side of a

set of stairs at the point of (what we assume is) orgasm. Here, the set mimics a function of the body in an act that assimilates the body with architecture. It is for this reason that this play has been chosen to examine under Vidler's theme, "The sense that the environment as a whole is endowed with bodily or at least organic characteristics," because the *Stockholm* set deliberately mimics functions of the human body throughout the play.

There are other devices in the play that involve the use of digital projection and mechanical movement as devices for trickery and deceit enacted by the set. The following chapter analyses the four settings in the play: the kitchen, the stairs, the bed and the attic. As the characters of Todd and Kali develop throughout the narrative of the play, the authority of the set becomes more apparent, as the playwright suggests, "but just as more of the set is revealed more of this couple is revealed and it is beyond their control. We are being taken deeper and deeper into their world and they are losing control of the presentation" (Frantic Assembly, 2008). The actions of the set and the actors are in sync. Throughout the play the audience is exposed more and more to the complexities of Kali and Todd's relationship, while the set simultaneously exposes more of its own complex inner workings.

In this first case study, the authoritative nature of architecture is elucidated by the manipulative theatre set that becomes a third character in the play. The set is so integral to the play's narrative that it was brought out from the UK to tour Australia (the set but not the actors). This inextricable relationship between architecture and the body is clearly personified in Lavery's *Stockholm* in a way that can only be expressed in the theatre. This quality of the theatre provides an alternative lens through which to investigate architecture. It is a simultaneously fictional and real collusion between the body and architecture.

While the set becomes animated, interacting with the actors in a way that would not be possible in the day to day experiences of domesticity, the way in which the actors' bodies interrelate with the architecture of the theatre set is real, palpable and physical. The set comes alive at a number of points throughout the play: in the first scene, the side of the stairs suddenly bloom flowers; the set revolves 180 degrees to take us further into the house, into the heart of the house, the kitchen; through digital projection the fridge that was once empty is suddenly fully stocked with champagne; the desk in the attic, which appears to have the same solid surface

of any desk, is revealed to be a vessel filled with water that pulls Kali into its watery surface, threatening to drown her; and then in the final scene, the bed that is suspended from above set, a second storey location, it tilts at 90 degrees, so that the couple are occupying an upright bed, tilting itself forward as though it will thrust them to the ground below at any moment. Stockholm's set adopts subjective qualities, mimicking functions of the body in a way that ultimately demonstrates the architecture's dominance over the human body. Buildings mimicking the body are widely written about and analysed through a theoretical lens but with this case study, through the unique spatial proposition of the theatre and the representational set, this research will shed new light on how this bodily mimesis physically impacts on bodies—challenging a sense of authority over real, physical bodies.

In the second scene of the play Kali and Todd first introduce the set, their home, as a character. The following in an excerpt from the play:

> TWO—INTERIOR: OUR GLORIOUS HOME
> **Kali**
> That place when they first saw it…
> **Todd**
> Two years ago only two years ago!
>
> *They put down their identical shopping and….*
> *They go*
> *Back in time*
>
> **Kali**
> Come in here. Take a look.
> **Todd**
> She brings me into this amazing place…
>
> And they are there…
> He shudders…
>
> **Kali**
> The place

Todd

The place

Kali

Fucking empty echoing nightmare

Todd

Nothing but a pleassic-jurassic sofa amid the quietly looming mildewed debris

Kali

Which they with Proustian precision shagged on

Todd

Their christening

Kali

Made it theirs sort of *Rosemary's Baby*

Seizing their fate…

Bought it

Took it

Gutted it

Todd

Pleassic-jurassic sofa…

Impressive mime of them both throwing the sofa strong as super-heroes The Incredibles into the far cosmos…

Kali

Took it back to just the four walls really

They got an architect friend of theirs

Todd

Mick

My old friend who became her new friend

Kali

Who drew up

The most wonderful plans

They've worked like slaves

But it was worth it

Todd

So worth it (Lavery, 2008, p. 25)

Todd and Kali's introduction of the set illuminates this relationship of pleasure and violence with the architecture of their home. This short introduction volleys between seduction (shagging) and brutality—the horrendous act of 'gutting' the house. This seemingly contrary relationship between seduction and brutality is intensified in the exchange between the characters and the set in the kitchen scene.

4.2 The Dangerous Kitchen

The domestic kitchen is a forceful proposition; designed with precision to control the body. The kitchen captures its prisoners, dictating bodies to conform with its prescriptive cues, as Bernard Tschumi writes,

> Such were the ideal kitchen installations of the twenties' Werkbund, each step of a near-biochemical housewife carefully monitored by the design's constant attention…. Most relations, of course, stand somewhere in between. You can sleep in your kitchen. And fight and love. These shifts are not without meaning. (1996, p. 132)

The Kitchen in the *Stockholm* set is the real deal, complete with appliances, it appears as a display model from an IKEA catalogue, complete with the perfect captive couple. After all, the play is called Stockholm and this physical reference to Sweden is a fitting tribute. The kitchen is witness to the perfectly choreographed dance of the couple unpacking their groceries. The actors move in an allegro dance sequence, working with the kitchen bench as a ballerina does with the barre, they work faultlessly to unpack their groceries. It is a seductive scene that hints at the intense sexual tension between the couple. The kitchen, though, is also the scene of manipulation and violence. In one scene in the kitchen Kali describes the processes of cooking a meal, "I sliced the tendons... revealing the softer, darker flesh. I removed the flesh from the shin. I sliced a small onion and browned the meat for about 5 minutes" (Frantic Assembly, 2008) in a ruthless tone. Later the fridge deceives Todd (and the audience) of its content through the clever use of digital projection employed in the set's intricate design. The fridge that was sparsely filled is suddenly fully stocked with champagne and Todd groans at the site of the fridge in anticipation of the alcohol fuelled arguments that will follow. This visual trickery of

the set brings forth Todd's unwilling participation in the evening's activities. The kitchen is supreme in its manipulation of Kali and Todd. The playwright describes this contradictory nature of the kitchen, she writes:

> …A kitchen is also a highly charged arena. It is a place of creation and of tension. It is hot. It is where the alcohol is. It has boiling water. It has flames. It has knives. It has unforgiving, hard, sharp edges. It is the perfect arena to play around with a story that has the potential to flip from romance to violence. The room itself suggests blood and the carving of meat, the processing and disposal of flesh. Yet this is where this modern couple choose to present themselves. Because they are brilliant in this space. They put away the shopping with a flourish, they entertain, they cook ambitious meals. They set out to have the perfect birthday meal yet are surrounded by the tools of destruction. This, to us, was a delicious tension. We were fascinated about how the kitchen could so quickly and easily transform from a place of creation to a place of destruction. (Frantic Assemble 2008)

4.3 The Erotic Stairs

Prior to the kitchen scene, the play opens at the stairs with an uncomfortable liaison between Todd and Kali. It is at the foot of the stairs that the audience is introduced to the character of the house and it is where the manipulation of Todd and Kali by the architecture first becomes apparent. Stairs, not unlike the kitchen, are meticulously designed to govern the body, as Tschumi writes, "Steep and dangerous staircases, those corridors consciously made too narrow for crowds, introduce a radical shift from architecture as an object of contemplation to architecture as a perverse instrument of use" (1996, p. 127). In the scene where Kali performs oral sex on Todd, he lies uncomfortably on the stairs, their two bodies squashed between a wall and hard edges of the stair's treads. At the moment of orgasm, the side of the stair erupts into a bloom of flowers. The blooms of flowers emerge with a popping sound through pinholes in the wall at the side of the stairs. The type of compressed flower that magicians use to hide in a hat or up their sleeve is concealed within the stairs and then mechanically pushed through the holes for the desired bloom effect. Again, the architecture mediates a line between pleasure and violence.

4.4 The Dangerous Bed

The final scene situated in the bed also subscribes to this correlation between pleasure and violence. The couple hang precariously from a bed tilted vertically, suspended some three metres above the stage floor. The couple use acrobatic ropes to climb over each other and navigate the dangerous bed that threatens to expel to the

floor at any minute. They lovingly embrace while clambering over each other so as not to fall to the ground. It is a scene that bounds between torture and sensuality. It is described in the play as the "dangerous bed" (Lavery, 2008, p. 8). This scene physically explicates the subtext of pleasure and violence in the play. While this scene concludes the play, it is not the scene that draws all of the play's content together, this occurs in the attic scene.

4.5 The Deceitful Attic

The concept of the "Stockholm Syndrome" is addressed in the penultimate scene in the attic. When Kali escapes to the attic the audience is made aware of her insecurities. This revelation allows the audience to feel some sympathy towards her situation. She is the captor, but what compels her to act in this way is, perhaps, why her hostage Todd feels such a connection to her despite her actions. This then leaves the architecture as the authority; the authority that the hostages reject in favour of their captor's cause. While the playwright does not explicitly offer this explanation, there is some discussion parallel to this interpretation when Lavery talks about the attic:

> Just like the kitchen and the bed would turn on the couple we wanted the attic to do the same. Laura Hopkins ingeniously designed a 'dangerous' desk that would pull Kali in and terrify her. This involved creating the illusion of a solid desk that was actually filled with water. It has a working laptop apparently resting on it along with a mug and angle poise lamp. Then, inexplicably, it pulls Kali into itself….It is a very exciting effect. It adds to the notion that 'Us' are desperately trying to tell them something. Does it also suggest that 'Us' is the house? Is 'Us' not just the suppressed personal knowledge of the protagonists but also the knowledge of the only continual observer, ie the house? (Lavery, 2008, p. 8)

It is an interesting thought. If this is so then this house that they built,

> **Todd**
>
> The house that love built

is not buying into this notion of the perfect relationship. It knows too much. It has seen too much. (Frantic Assembly, 2008)

4.6 The House (Us) as a Character

The trickery played by the set - with the fridge that alters its contents, the desk that pulls Kali into its watery surface, the stairs that bloom and the bed that tilts and endangers its occupants—all mimic functions of the body. It is a character within the

play, both as a metaphor and in its physical actions. The body as the basis for architecture, those Vitruvian proportions of the human body, are the fundamental basis for classical architecture; the type of architecture employed by nation states and governments for housing government, culture and organisations of power and authority. Mimicking the proportions of the body, or bodily operations through architecture has an historical association with authority and governance and this relationship, to some extent is explored in the animation of the *Stockholm* theatre set—it does, however, depict a relationship between the body and architecture with greater personal intensity than any building representing governmental authority.

The body represented by the architecture of the Stockholm set, the character Us, is not the same static, perfect body encapsulated by the Vitruvian Man. It is an abject body that deceives, ejaculates, endangers and is ultimately a body that conceives of death as described in the monologue by Us (the house) in the last scene. The house's monologue is narrated by Todd and Kali to low lighting and brooding sound to elicit its presence and dominance over its inhabitants:

Todd
We should get started on the cellar soon

Kali
I know
We'll do it as soon as we get back from Stockholm

US
Yes
Eventually
In the future
Sometime
Later
They'll find in this cellar
Look
Squashed flat on the cement floor
Their children
Who they know won't be breathing
Will be still as dolls
Smothered
Cotdeathed
These are the children these two make grow up
Beauties beautiful children with their
Fragile easy-bruising snap-happy limbs
The children who make the newspaper story
When he walks out
When he walks out for good this time

And she calls him on his mobile
And says 'If you don't come back I can't go on living'
And she puts their oldest child on the phone
Says 'tell Daddy'
'tell Daddy you want to go where Mummy's going'
and the eldest child says
'I love you Daddy. Please come back.'
And he's important with rage at the poor sentimental dialogue
She's been made to memorise his eldest daughter
These are the children in the car in the lay-by
These are the ones who drink the Ribena with the sleeping
Pills crushed up in it
These are the ones she gets to phone him all that long last night…
As the car fills not with air

Todd
Strip it right back

Gut it absolutely

Kali
Yes
Okay
Good
As soon as we get back from Stockholm(Lavery, 2008, p. 32)

In my analogy that the house, or Us, is the authority in this Stockholm Syndrome, the authority is imperfect, faulted, perhaps even dangerous. It is the character projecting the violent future and not the captor, Kali. It is dictating to its subjects a tragic event yet to play out. This abject, fragmented and tragic body as central to contemporary and postmodern architecture will be further discussed in Chapter 6 in my analysis of Harold Pinter's work.

The authority of the set in *Stockholm* is recognised not simply by its presence, but by its animation and simulation of the human body. It frames and precedes its subjects, Kali and Todd by, as Tschumi would describe, by its violent actions. Todd's rejection of the authority encapsulated by the architecture leads him into the arms of his captor. The rejection of architecture's dominance is built upon in the case studies that follow. In the performances analysed in the next two chapters, the works reject architecture through an inversion of the relationship between the body and architecture in the *Stockholm* setting. In the following case studies instead of the architecture mimicking the body, the body—or bodies—are used to represent or mimic architecture. Through this inversion of the exchange between the body and

architecture the performers' body becomes a device that symbolises a power struggle or becomes an act of political subversion.

Through the *Stockholm* case study the need for architecture to reference, and in the case of the architecture of the *Stockholm* set mimic, the body in order to derive authority is clearly evident. This chapter, which analysed *Stockholm* under Vidler's theme, " the sense that the environment as a whole is endowed with bodily or at least organic characteristics," demonstrates this reciprocal relationship between the body, architecture and authority, that it is, as Vidler describes, through bodily analogy and metaphor. This perceived authority is achieved when the architecture of the *Stockholm* set via mimicking the body and bodily characteristics and functions. This elaborate mimicking through animation and digital projection in the representational architecture in *Stockholm*, amplifies the way in which bodies interact with domestic environments. This exaggeration by the *Stockholm* set creates a new way of seeing how bodies relate to architecture and as such short-circuits (that is to see something in a new way) architecture, authority and the body. The play also opens up further discussion, elaborated on in Chapter 7 of this thesis, about the complexities of living, breathing abject bodies and they way in which they relate to architecture and they way in which, for *Stockholm,* architecture can mimic this complex, three dimensional body. The most interesting contribution *Stockholm* brings to the discussion in this thesis is that it involves an architecture of moving parts – its mimicry of the body captures movement, which is something that architecture struggles to emulate.

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: The Notion That the Building *Is* a Body of Some Kind

5.1 Introduction

Architecture, as a creative discipline, is understood as being synergetic with existing power structures (MoMA, 2006). It is a material manifestation of the state, nation, and institutions; of capitalism, power and authority. There are very rare circumstances where architecture might represent some minority cause, or make a stand against a political system. The authority of architectural materiality is often the catalyst for some intense association with the physical human body—the wall that defines gender or class, the double bolted door that incarcerates. It enacts the social and political systems through bodily occupation (Volz, 2013, p. 56). In this chapter, the case studies will examine how these power relationships embodied by architecture might be challenged or subtly protested against through the body as a representation of walls. The intimidating nature of walls to demarcate, separate, intimidate, influence and control is a relationship most can relate to in their experiences with architecture. It is in these moments that architecture leaps from the sphere of object into the realm of subject, where we might be involved in some

intense struggle with the placement of a wall, the wall that might separate us from a lover, justice, freedom, power or privacy. (Volz, 2013, p. 58) At the climactic point in both plays a character named 'Wall', played by an actor, makes a brief appearance.

This chapter includes two case studies that investigate where the body references architecture in performance, more specifically where the performer's body becomes the architecture or an element of the architecture. These case studies are grouped under Vidler's second theme, 'the notion that building *is* a body of some kind.' (1996, p. 71) Under this theme, the case studies build on Vidler's statement, proving that this arrangement between the body and architecture is reciprocal. For the building to be a body -- the architecture must reference the body -- and the body must reference the architecture. The two case studies utilised in this chapter are William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c.1596) and The Escapists' *Boy Girl Wall* (2010), in both of which a performer enacts the character of a wall. These two case studies further exemplify this reflexive relationship between authority, architecture and the body. Congruently, both Wall characters separate two lovers but this separation in both plays is also a metaphor for some protest against authority in the metanarrative of the play. Bringing the Wall to life enables the story teller to overcome a political struggle within the play and in the broader societal context in which the play is set. Using the body to mimic architecture becomes a vehicle for the playwright to subtly portray political subversion (Volz, 2013, p. 56).

5.2 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

In a play within a play, the Mechanical's production within William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* the character Snout announces his transformation to play the character of Wall. Snout's portrayal of Wall is both comical and menacing as he represents the forces that separate the lovers Pyramus and Thisby. Wall becomes a subject in a manner no different from the lovers that he separates; his influence on their situation is brought to life. In the Mechanicals' production, Snout introduces his transformation to become to Wall:

> In this same interlude it doth befall
> That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
> And such a wall, as I would have you think,

That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper. (Shakespeare, 1989, p. 44)

A Midsummer Night's Dream is, perhaps, Shakespeare's most famous comedy and the story line will be well known to most. The play involves three intertwining stories between the Athenians, the faeries and the mechanicals that are set in between the palace in Athens and in the dream like, utopian woods or forest. The Athenians are embroiled in a love triangle and family dispute, the mechanicals are a group of amateur performers devising a performance for the Athenian royal court and both the Athenians and Mechanical's are manipulated by the faeries who are motivated by their own quarrels. In this analysis the focus is on the Mechanicals and their play within *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; 'Pyramus and Thisbe.'

The Mechanicals play within a play is by its very nature reflexive. The meta-drama draws attention to its own fictional being, it short circuits the aesthetic of the theatre. The focus in this chapter is on Wall who separates the two lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe who communicate with each other through a hole or a 'chink' in the wall. In the third act of the play the Mechanicals rehearse in the woods and it is here that they decide that an actor in some sort of costume must play the wall; the actor being Snout. Bottom suggests:

Some man or other must present Wall: and let him
have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast
about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus,
and through that cranny shall Pyramus
and Thisby whisper. (Shakespeare, 1989, p. 46)

It is understood that reviews of Elizabethan theatre were more concerned with the music than they were with scenography, compared with critics of later modern theatre, and that it is for this reason that plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* lend themselves so easily to adaptations of productions in dance. (Olson, 1967, p.

112) The idea of an actor playing an integral but missing part of scenery may have been commonplace in amateur, and even perhaps professional, theatre. The wall itself within the meta-drama of the play acts as a mirror within a mirror to the play as theorist Hugh Grady writes,

> "The play models in its own aesthetic space an implied theory about the relation of the aesthetic to the larger social world. That it is a mirror within a mirror is the key to its meta-aesthetic quality. And although the difference between these two realms is clear, the barrier between them, like wall in the inset play, has chinks in it, and within each separate domain there are traces of its excluded other" (Grady, 2009, p. 121).

Therefore, the mechanical's play is reflexive of both the content within the play while also holding a mirror to broader social and political issues of the late 16th and early 17th century.

A number of Shakespearean historians and theorists point to the notion that the Mechanical's play was a political protest to Queen Elizabeth's denial of a license to perform at court for amateur performers. (Montrose, 1992, p. 201) Unlike the meta-drama in *Hamlet*—where Hamlet devises a performance that is intrinsic to the plot—the content of the Mechanical's play is tangential to the narrative, the focus is more so on the performers. The players are amateur performers, all of them are artisans, or tradesmen. The players are, Peter Quince, the carpenter who plays the Prologue, Snug the joiner plays Lion, Nick Bottom, the weaver as Pyramus, Francis Flute, the bellows-mender plays Thisbe, Tom Snout, the tinker as Wall and Robin Starveling, the tailor plays Moonshine. Theorist Louis Montrose writes that while it is unknown as to whether Shakespeare worked as an artisan prior to becoming a professional playwright, a number of his contemporaries in the professional theatre had previously worked as carpenters and masons. Therefore it is likely that the purpose of the Mechanical's play was a protest against the Elizabethan aristocracies restrictions on amateur theatre. Montrose provides further evidence for this argument including Puck's cynical apology at the end of the play. (Montrose, 1992, p. 199)

Further to this, in this analysis I draw attention to Snout's portrayal of Wall as being more than a mere representation of architecture, but also a representation of authority. In the very last lines of the Mechanical's play Bottom proclaims:

> No assure you; the wall is down that
> parted their fathers (Shakespeare, 1989, p. 90)

Here Bottom alludes to another reflexive device where the wall is some material manifestation of class separation. This reflects the lover's situation at the beginning of the play where Egeus, a member of the Athenian court, forbids the union between Lysander and his daughter Hermia, as he has chosen Demetrius to wed his daughter. In the same way that wall separates Pyramus and Thisbe, Egeus forbids Hermia from marrying a man he feels is unsuitable. The connections between feminism and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are also widely written about (Montrose, 1992, p. 199) and through Bottom's lines we are made aware that Wall is a metaphor for a patriarchal society as well as the separation of classes. Shakespeare's character Wall in the Mechanical's play works as a subtle metaphor for specific political situations of Elizabethan society. It is a reflexive device. Both within the play's narrative itself and also reflects broader social issues.

5.3 Boy Girl Wall

In the second play, *Boy Girl Wall* (2010), a contemporary one act play devised by Australian theatre group, The Escapsists. (Drama Queensland, 2010). This play follows on neatly from *A Midsummer Night's* dream where we are introduced to two lovers, Thom and Alethea who are separated by the wall that divides their living spaces in a block of inner city apartments. The play is set in 2010 and the two central characters, Thom, an IT worker, who has a greater calling in astronomy and Alethea, a writer, who is plagued by the demands of soulless publishers, are not aware of each others' existence until the transcendence of the wall through a (electrical) short circuit in their apartments. The simplicity of the set plays with the familiar painted black walls and floor of the thrust stage as they are transformed into surfaces for chalk drawings; simple white lines demarcate and symbolize the location of walls and doors, emulating the architectural plan. The audience is made aware that they are in a theatre, not tricked by the signifiers present in a mimetic theatre set. A single light bulb suspended over centre stage flicks on, the result of the perfectly closed loop of an electrical circuit and so the play begins. While neither Boy, Girl or wall are physically represented at any point throughout the play, they are all embodied through the performance of one single actor on stage. They are realised, along with other supplementary characters, the days of the week and even the windows and doors, through the actions of a single performer - although not simultaneously, obviously (Volz, 2013, p. 56).

While mostly only present through chalk lines, the architecture of the block of flats in 'Boy Girl Wall' frames and precedes its subjects. For the characters Alethea (girl) and Thom (boy), the wall divides them but also draws them together. It is only when the short circuit between the characters escalates, manifested in the building's electrical wiring causing a black out in the block of flats, that the separation created by the wall is transcended. The architecture that separates the lovers is initially disturbed by its subjectification. To subvert the wall that separates the lovers, the one actor that plays both characters, becomes the wall. The subject becomes the signifier (the wall) and the signifier becomes the subject (Volz, 2013, p. 61).

At the centre—right down the middle—of the *Boy Girl Wall* story is the wall marked out in white solid chalk lines. It is a signifier of numerous dialectics that are present in the story; the dialectic that exists between art and capitalism, employment and satisfaction, male and female—a boy and a girl. The architecture represents an organisation and categorisation of capitalist society, which in this analysis, is an underlying subtext to the play. Not only do Thom and Alethea discover each other when the wall is transcended but also their individual struggles with work hierarchies and personal struggles with the capitalisation of art are overcome (Volz, 2013, 60).

Figure 4: Lucas Stibbard plays 'Wall' in The Escapists' *Boy Girl Wall*, 2010. Photograph by Al Caeiro.

5.4 The Wall that Brings Us Together Also Divides Us Apart

Between the two plays it's difficult to come to a definitive conclusion, in terms of their use of the human body to represent architecture as a politically subversive device, because the reflexive content of the plays are dealing with very different political systems. While both have a political subtext, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is responding to aristocratic structures of power, division of classes and oppressive patriarchies, while Boy Girl Wall is concerned with contemporary capitalism and its oppression of aspirations in art and work. What the two plays do share is a struggle against oppression embodied by a wall. But why use a body to represent the wall? In both cases an actor playing the wall is comical and this would suggest that using the body to signify architecture is a mocking gesture to the authority it represents. The most interesting commonality between the two plays is the form in which the actor takes to play a wall—there is an unspoken, uniformed bodily semiotics of 'wall.'

A quick Google images search of *Midsummer Night's Dream Wall* will produce a series of images of actors, professional and amateur, standing tall, arms stretched in a 'T' formation with legs slightly apart, a pose echoed by Lucas Stibbard when he plays Wall in the play 'Boy Girl Wall.' Neither play describes this pose, but this appears to be the universal pose to represent a wall, a pose very much reminiscent of the Vitruvian man. This pose is especially awkward in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when wall has to 'Wall holds up his fingers,' (Shakespeare, 1989, p. 42) as the script directs, while having arms outstretched. Where, then does this pose for Wall originate? It is not suggested in Shakespeare's script nor is it described in Boy Girl Wall. It appears to be a default 'Wall' position. This pose, I suggest, forms a reflexive loop between the body, architecture and the Vitruvian man. It represents a constrained positioning of the body mimicking the way that architecture attempts to control the abject human body. The actor's freely mobile body becomes static and constrained, imitating the idealised Vitruvian man. Where the Vitruvian man references the body, architecture references the Vitruvian man and here, the body in performance references the Vitruvian man (Volz, 2013, p. 62). And thus exemplifies the reciprocity between the body, architecture and authority that this thesis aims to identify.

While the actor's portrayal of 'Wall' may impart the playwright's contest to an existing authority, the actor's body merely becomes a representation for some

alternative power structure. As French Intellectual Georges Bataille wrote, “for that matter, whenever we find architectural construction elsewhere than in monuments, whether it be in physiognomy, dress, music, or painting, we can infer a prevailing taste for human or divine authority.” (Bataille, 1958, p. 11) If the pose taken by the actor read as something else, limp, weak an imperfect abject body instead of the sturdy, balanced stance of the Vitruvian man, a very different image of architecture would be created.

Studying the relationship between the body and architecture through the body transpires to an understanding of a broader social interaction. This reading of architecture and the body from a broader, societal lens also enables a detailed reading of its political and authoritative scope. Further to this there is a reciprocal engagement between the body and architecture. The way in which architecture references the body is broadly culturally referenced, specifically the pose articulated by the Vitruvian man. The authority of architecture is derived from the body in the same way that bodies can be positioned in a way to overthrow it. Disrupting, as Tschumi describes, the architects’ script (1996, p. 124). The body is the most significant way to refer to a person and it is through the body that we have access to architecture.

These two plays reflect on very specific power and political struggles within the performing arts—protested against through performance. Both are also approaching these arts community concerns through humour. In the next chapter the works that are analysed are overtly political in nature, addressing issues of societies and nation states. The next chapter broadens the study’s analysis of authority and architecture from a specific community or personal interaction to broader issues of national and international contention. As such the instances of collusions between the body and architecture are more interwoven through the work rather than specific occurrences within the script or work. Rather than the body as architecture being apparent, the political nature of the work is immediately present, where the body as architecture is found in metaphors within the script, performer’s actions or the physical set.

This chapter has demonstrated through a visual analysis of the positioning of the performers’ bodies, that this relationship between authority, architecture and the body is deeply reciprocal. In the two case studies presented in this chapter under

Vidler's theme of 'the notion that the building *is* a body of some kind,' the body that was derived to the be the basis of the architecture, the Vitruvian Man, becomes the body that is mimicked by the performer to represent architecture. This is re-doubling of the architectural body, one of firmness and stillness, where the representation of the body used as the basis of architecture becomes the body used to represent architecture in performance. This analysis, along with the analysis of the *Stockholm*, points to further discussion on the stillness of architecture and the capacity for theatre to generate an architecture that mimics a moving body. The production design for *Boy Girl Wall* also introduces the point on bodies as agents themselves, reciprocally constructing spaces and places in the theatre that will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6: The Idea that the Building Embodies Some States of the Body or, More Importantly, States of Mind Based on Bodily Sensation

6.1 Introduction to Chapter Case Studies

In this last case study chapter the more abstract associations between the body and architecture are drawn, building on Vidler's third theme, 'the idea that the building embodies some states of the body or, more importantly, states of mind based on bodily sensation.' In this chapter the focus shifts away from specific bodies or specific instances where the architecture physically affects the body. In these works the architecture represents oppression both by its presence on stage and its marked absence. Architecture is always loaded with some signification; it creates highly inscribed spaces. In the absence of architecture, space is not necessarily without inscription, for within the void there can exist an anti-architecture. Like the black box theatre, it is both empty and full at the same time (Hannah, 2003, p. 11). In the absence of the architecture, the void of space and how it is occupied becomes much more profound. This chapter analyses the work of Harold Pinter and his use of the body to create an anti-architecture to subvert oppressors and power structures.

Pinter's works are an important case study in this research due to their overtly political nature. His works are also heavily tied to territory, which bound the works in a dependent relationship with a simulated 'place'. This is evident in the citation accompanying the playwright's Nobel Laureate, "...in his plays [he] uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression's closed rooms" (Nobel Laureate Citation, 2005). In Pinter's work oppression manifests itself in the representation of a room, the architecture, which is the cause of a power struggle when objectified and defeated when subjectified. The following chapter examines how Pinter uses the body to subjectify and represent architecture as authority in his earlier works, which relied on detailed mimetic sets of domestic rooms, and then in his later political works, that were freed of representational scenography. This paper will also look at the adaption of Pinter's work by the Belarus Free Theatre in their

2008 production, *Being Harold Pinter.*

The work of Pinter and the Belarus Free Theatre are concerned with authoritarian political structures. That is, political structures, which work against ideas of individualism, ascribing to a mass-produced body as an artefact of dictatorship and conservatism. The focus on the body in space on an empty stage draws attention to the individual—the body among scenography can become merely another prop, lost in the borders and boundaries that the scenery dictates. Through an analysis of selected works by Harold Pinter and their interpretations, this chapter examines this paradox of emptiness and fullness through the body as anti-architecture in performance (Volz, 2013, p. 65).

6.2 Harold Pinter's Work

Pinter's earlier works are characterised by the detailed use of the room. With exhaustive set descriptions and long lists of properties, the Pinter set becomes cluttered and full. These prescriptive stage directions would at once appear to threaten the set designer's creativity. However, the set requires much more than the objects and furniture requested in Pinter's list. The set needs to contain and oppress its subjects; creating an environment that frames them in a way that is instantly recognisable to the audience. The characters do not own the room; rather the characters belong to the room. It is the extent of their existence, it contains all that they possess: objects, beliefs and understandings. Ownership of this space is a core theme to the play as the characters engage in a territorial conflict over the room. The conflict itself binds them to the space, further oppressing their sensibilities and containing them within the room (Volz, 2010, p. 32).

A unique attribute to Pinter's work is a textual device in which the human body is assimilated with the room's architecture and the objects within the room. Pinter's rooms illustrate this relationship from the inverse where the human body is a reflection of the architecture, in a way that the body dominates the power structures that the architecture, or the room, represents. In these earlier works the Pinter room is 'full' as though it represents the pregnant body. There is something substantial about these rooms that frames and precedes its characters (Volz, 2013, p. 34).

In Victor Cahn's book, *Gender and Power in the plays of Harold Pinter,* (1993) this assimilation between body, especially the female body, and architecture

is identified in the play Pinter's play 'Homecoming' (Cahn, 1993, p. 74). Cahn identifies this bodily association when the character Teddy introduces his wife, Ruth, to the house. (1996, p. 76) Teddy tells her about the home's structure not being affected by the removal of a wall after his mother had died. Here, there is an association between the structure of the house and the mother. With the wall removed, the structure of the household had not been altered and Teddy associates this with the absence of his mother. (Cahn, 1993, p. 81) Framing Teddy's assimilation between his mother and the house as subjectifying the architecture, rather then objectifying the mother, we can start to think about architecture as an entity that engages in subversive acts. This becomes especially evident in the case of Ruth in *The Homecoming* when she claims territory over the house without directly engaging in the territorial struggle pursued by the male characters. Throughout the play Ruth's presence is compared to a number of objects including the disturbance of a chiming clock in the night, and, in a philosophical argument about matter she also associates her own leg with the leg of a table (Pinter, 1964, p. 35). Her claim to power is not thwarted by being 'objectified' rather she uses the subjectification of the architecture and objects in a subversive act to claim territory. Instead of fighting for the house she becomes the house—she subjectifies the house (Pinter, 1964, p. 35). (Volz, 2013, p. 36)

Another device employed by Pinter is the positioning of an authority in a diegetic space upstairs. This was employed in an early work of Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (1957) and on this device he was quoted saying, *'*It was quite obvious to the actors that the chap who is upstairs and is never seen is a figure of authority.*'* (Pinter, 2005) Authoritative figures in Pinter's plays are rarely materially manifest, instead referred to as a room upstairs and this device is present in his later, overtly political works, as well.

The period between 1980 and 2000 is described as Pinter's political period (Cahn, 1993, p. 12). While his earlier works could be understood to contain some political undertones, these later plays were explicitly political, influenced by a number of factors including a trip to Turkey in 1985 with Arthur Miller (Cahn, 1993, p. 8). In these plays, the walls of the Pinter room are still present, but the set is almost empty of props. The presence of the walls then becomes stark, more pronounced, as the set directions and lists of properties decline. For example

Mountain Language (1988), entails no specific stage directions, only that each short scene opens with a simple description such as: 'a prison wall', 'visitor's room' and 'voice in the darkness.' (Pinter, 1988, p. 3) *One for the Road* (1984) simply calls for 'A room' in the morning, afternoon and at night. (Pinter, 1984, p. 2) *Ashes to Ashes* (1996) calls for more details than the others, a room with a window looking to a garden beyond, some properties and directions for lighting; these directions though are still not as detailed as his earlier works (Pinter, 1996, p. 2). While this shift in scenographic aesthetic may have simply been a reflection of styles or trends in this period, I argue that it is more so a material reflection of the stark political content within these plays (Volz, 2013, p. 35).

The emptiness of the set draws focus onto the presence of the walls of the Pinter room. These walls are understood to represent the abstract notion of territory, borders and boundaries created by contemporary politics. The word culture was originally derived from the idea of 'cultivating territory' in that territory was once defined by cultural behaviour in the forms of language, dress, ritual and so on (Papastergiadis, 1999, p. 35). Conversely, in the modern world, where globalization, international warfare and contemporary politics have convoluted this traditional notion of culture, imaginary lines are drawn to define territory, dividing real estate allotments, states, countries and nations (Papastergiadis, 1999, p. 37). Elucidating this correlation between the walls of his rooms and national or political boundaries, Pinter made the following comments in a 1985 interview about *One for the Road:*

> ….He has all power within those walls. He knows this is the case, he believes that it is right, for him, to possess this power, because as far as he's concerned, he's acting for his country legitimately and properly. When he refers to the country's values, those are his values. (Pinter, 1986, p. 2)

In plays such as *One for the Road* and *Ashes to Ashes* Pinter uses references to diegetic rooms to represent figures of authority and secondary characters external to the story. The emptiness of the set is echoed through the assimilation of characters with rooms or spaces elsewhere, instead of objects or subjectifying the architecture of the room represented on stage, as utilised in his earlier works. In *One for the Road* the reference to persons of authority existing in a room upstairs is employed:

> Nicolas: Where are you now? Do you think you are in a hospital? Do you think we have nuns upstairs? What do we have upstairs?
>
> Gila: No nuns.

Nicolas: What do we have?

Gila: Men. (Pinter, 1986, p. 12)

There are several points throughout the play where an association is made between a secondary character and a specific space. Earlier in this scene Nicolas asks Gila where she and Victor met. She responds saying that they met in a room. Nicolas isn't happy with this response and wants more information on the room in which they met. Gila then confesses it was in her Father's room. Nicolas, enraged, accuses her of defaming her father, as though the mention of the Father's room is a direct representation of the Father (Pinter, 1986, p. 24). This is similar to Teddy in *The Homecoming* comparing a room in his house to his Mother. However, in *One for the Road* all of the rooms and thearchitecture are subjectified in the masculine. An example of this is in the first act when Nicolas interrogates Victor; he describes the destruction of his house, as though the degradation of his house is a reflection of his own torture:

> I hear you have a lovely house. Lots of books. Someone told me one of my boys kicked it around a bit. Pissed on the rugs, that sort of thing. I wish they wouldn't do that. I do really. But you know what it's like—they have such responsibilities—and they feel them—they are constantly present—day and night—these responsibilities—and so, sometimes, they piss on a few rugs. You understand. You're not a fool. (Pinter, 1986, p. 32)

This sentiment of the house and the abused body is captured in Jean Paul Sartre's work in Being and Nothingness, which is also referenced in Vidler's work, he writes, "the body is everywhere: the bomb which destroys my house also damages my body insofar as the house was already an indication of my body" (Sartre, 1981, 23). Pinter uses the destruction of Victor's house as a metaphor for torture of the body, in the same way as he doesn't explicitly refer to Gila's torture, instead uses the metaphor of the men in a space upstairs. By deferring torture of the body to architecture, the purified body of architecture sanitises the representation of torture; the body that does not bleed or weep.

This tactic of diversion from body to architecture can also be found in *Ashes to Ashes.* In *Ashes to Ashes* (Pinter, 1996), the character Rebecca tells stories of watching people being moved, presumably displaced by war or a political regime.

> Oh yes there's something I've forgotten to tell you. It was funny. I looked out of the garden window, out of the window into the garden, in the middle of summer, in that house in Dorset, do you remember? Oh no, you weren't there. I don't think anyone else was there. No. I was all by myself. I was all alone. I

> was looking out of the window and I saw a whole crowd of people walking through the woods, on their way to the sea, in the direction of the sea. They seemed to be very cold, they were wearing coats, although it was such a beautiful day. A beautiful, warm, Dorset day. They were carrying bags. There were…. guides…. ushering them, guiding them along. They walked through the woods and I could see them in the distance walking across the cliff and down to the sea. Then I lost sight of them. Then I lost sight of them. I was really quite curious so I went upstairs to the highest window in the house and I looked way over the top of the treetops and I could see down to the beach. The guides… were ushering all these people across the beach. It was such a lovely day. It was so still and the sun was shining. And I saw all these people walk into the sea. The tide covered them slowly. Their bags bobbed about in the waves. (Pinter, 1996, 52)
>
> Oh by the way there's something I meant to tell you. I was standing in a room at the top of a very tall building in the middle of town. The sky was full of stars. I was about to close the curtains but I stayed at the window for a time looking at the stars. Then I looked down. I saw an old man and a little boy walking down the street. They were both dragging suitcases. The little boy's suitcase was bigger than he was. It was a very bright night. Because of the stars. The old man and the little boy were walking down the street. They were hold each other's free hand. I wondered where they were going. Anyway, I was about to close the curtains but then I suddenly saw a woman following them, carrying a baby in her arms. (Pinter, 1996, 63)

She narrates her recollections as though she is witnessing the activity from a vantage point, from a tall building or the upper floor of the house. She uses the placement of her body in some distant elevated room to dislocate herself from the story (Volz, 2013, p. 37). In Pinter's Nobel Laureate speech he described the aesthetic of the play as follows:

> *Ashes to Ashes*, on the other hand, seems to me to be taking place under water. A drowning woman, her hand reaching up through the waves, dropping down out of sight, reaching for others, but finding nobody there, either above or under the water, finding only shadows, reflections, floating; the woman a lost figure in a drowning landscape, a woman unable to escape the doom that seemed to belong only to others. (Pinter, 2005)

In this excerpt, Pinter describes what I consider to be the empty scene of his political works. This underlying aesthetic to *Ashes to Ashes* is explicitly expressed by the Belarus Free Theatre in their work *Being Harold Pinter*.

6.3 *Being Harold Pinter*

Hailing from the last dictatorship in Europe, The Belarus Free Theatre is an unlicensed group of dramatists and activists who produce and perform prohibited

modern works and exercise free speech through performance in Belarus (The Belarus Free Theatre, 2008). As such their performances take place outside of the frame of the theatre in empty apartments, warehouses and cafes. The group came to notoriety in 2007 with their production, *Being Harold Pinter.* The aesthetics of this work have been described as,

> The staging, makeup and costuming were minimal and the effects simple—an apple being crushed to simulate oppression, a plastic sheet thrown over the cast to simulate drowning, small shoes to suggest the vision of a child being attacked. But, the performance was powerful nonetheless. This kind of theatre reminds us that simple ideas (like a small flame moved over a naked body to suggest torture) can still be harrowing if well implemented (Gros, 2011).

Of particular interest to this study is the group's use of a plastic sheet and its resonance with plastic inflatable structures as anti-architecture and political activism by architectural groups Archigram, Ant Farm and Utopie in the 1960s and 1970s.[2] In "Architecture Dismembered", Vidler describes the assimilation between the body and transparent and inflatable architecture, "a literal biomorphism, akin to many similar but less threatening science fiction images of the Archigram era" (Vidler, 1996, 72).[3] Working with Utopie after the May uprising in Paris in 1968 Jean

[2] Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, there were a number of revolutionary architectural groups who were experimenting with new plastic materials, polythene, as wells as pneumatics and inflatable structures. They were creating anti-architecture as a reaction to the fear and conservatism that had come to prominence in post-war western society (Scott, 2011, p. 61). This was the equivalent of a 'Woodstock' for architecture (Scott, 2011, p. 63), with a freer, nomadic form of architecture in response to fixity and sterility created by the mass building of post war modern architecture. The groups; Ant Farm in the United States, Utopie in France and Italy and Archigram in Britain, had varied premises behind their use of translucent polythene materials. For example Mike Webb's *Suitaloon* for Archigram was designed as a home that could be taken with you anywhere. The suit/architecture was a device designed to "blur the boundaries between different kinds of bodily enclosures" (Scott, 2011, p. 72). The Suitaloon was designed as a barrier to the social tensions that were seen to be an increasing part of everyday life. Its desired effect was to block out the excesses of information; as Peter Cook described, it was "*a man container*" (Dessauce, 1999, p. 89).

[3] Archigram with their *Suitaloon* were not as explicitly political as their counterparts Ant Farm who would combine a performance art piece depicting apocalyptic scenarios to accompany their inflatable structures. In the *Clean Air Pod* of 1970 at the University of Berkley, Ant Farm members would wear a face mask and use a monotone loud speaker to announce that an air failure had occurred and that people should move to occupy the inflatable structure. The performance was elaborate in details of strategy, media and press. Utopie also had overtly political motivations theoretically (Scott, 2011, p. 77), but were not as successful as Ant Farm and Archigram in prototyping their ideas. All three groups share a common thread of political activism and the use of translucent inflatable structures. Experimental architects of the 1960s and 1970s, Archigram and Ant Farm both placed emphasis on the body in their performance works using a transparent plastic sheet in the same manner as the Belarus Free Theatre in *Being Harold Pinter.* This correlation is discussed in Chapter 6 of this thesis. Both of these groups also employed a DIY aesthetic. For Archigram and their work the Suitaloon, which was a prototype inflatable living cell, was used as the basis of one of their performance art films. The premise of this work was to develop their concept of the "Living City" where individual people were responsible for creating places within cities in response to the excessively planned and

Baudrillard wrote that, “The rights of man have an inflatable structure. The [French] revolution and its commemoration have become inflatable structures” (1990, p. 56). By this, he means that they are both full (inflated with air) and empty (but filled with nothing), like the black box theatre as Dorita Hannah has described (2003, p. 12). For the Belarus Free Theatre, the plastic sheet is used to represent oppression, yet for a number of early postmodern architects, plastic structures were seen as a form of liberation from the oppression and classicism of post war and modern architecture (Scott, 2010, p. 68).

Being Harold Pinter is a work that has been described as straddling political theatre and actual activism. The work is comprised of edited excerpts from Pinter’s plays, *The Homecoming, Ashes to Ashes, One for the Road, The New World Order, Mountain Language* and *Old Times* along with excerpts from his Nobel Laureate speech, *Art, Truth, Politics* and documentary monologues of political captives from Belarusian prisons (The Belarus Free Theatre, 2008). The play’s scenography is simple due to the Belarus Free Theatre’s performances generally taking place in apartments, cafes or warehouses (The Belarus Free Theatre, 2008). Their politically controversial standpoints prohibit them from performing in theatres in Belarus, however it has also brought them international attention and support with Harold Pinter freely giving them the rights to his work (The Belarus Free Theatre, 2008). The script doesn’t entail any specific staging, but the set generally consists of two chairs, an image of Harold Pinter, painted or marked lines on the floor to symbolize ‘the Pinter room,’ a large plastic sheet and various other minor properties. The set for *Being Harold Pinter* is empty, only filled by the bodies of the actors. A review of the play described the aesthetic of the play as:

governed cities in the postwar era. The Suitaloon was designed by Archigram to be versatile, portable DIY space for people to adapt and create however they liked in the urban environment. It was a spaced designed for the individual to inhabit within the anonymity of the modern city.
Ant Farm’s portable DIY Inflatable spaces were much larger and were designed to host ad hoc performances and lectures within public spaces. These inflatable structures were designed to subvert the structure of tightly goverened public spaces, including university campuses. Further to this spatial disruption, Ant Fram distributed a DIY book to inflatable architecture titled, *Inflatocookbook* (Ant Farm, 1973) to encourage others to partake in their political spatial subversive “architectural performances”. These works are perhaps not traditionally classified as performance works, however their intent was to create a performance based work, where the inflatable structures required a performer or performers (not necessarily trained) to enact the use of these unusual spaces. The anti-architecture sentiment of these works required signification of a performers’ body/ies to demonstrate the use of these space and as such the power of the body over the architecture was implicit within these works.

> The actors spit out the words with no time for the Pinteresque pause. The dialogue is in Russian (with English subtitles) but it is the imagery that will stay with audiences. In one scene from The Homecoming, an actor sprays the stage with saliva before planting his face in a dog's bowl. A woman in Ashes To Ashes speaks of her baby being snatched from her arms at a railway station, delivering the words while pressing against a sheet of transparent plastic, eventually engulfing three other actors in suffocating polythene sheeting. An apple is obliterated beneath a boot; a burning paper aeroplane flies across the stage. (Gros, 2011)

In their adaption of excerpts from *Ashes to Ashes,* one female actor delivers her despondent lines from under a translucent plastic sheet (see Figure 6). Slowly, other actors join her under the plastic sheet in what has been described by some as an act to symbolise political repression and by others as metaphor of censorship and creative constraint enforced by the Belarus political regime. However the plastic sheet is, or has been, interpreted it creates a powerful image that is most often photographed and mentioned by reviewers. It is one scene from the play that appears to have a universal lingering effect on audiences.

Figure 6 The Belarus Free Theatre performs *Ashes to Ashes* in *Being Harold Pinter* 2008. Image courtesy of Natalia Kaliada.

6.5 Abject Bodies

This emphasis on the unpurified body is an act of political subversion against collectivism in the face of dictators and conservatisms. The lack of hard material on the stage enacts a greater focus on the abject, impure body, rather than the classical idealised proportions body described by Vitruvius and emulated by architects for centuries. As Vidler writes it is the idealized body that defines an individual and societal body through classical architecture. Doritah Hannah explicates how the absence of this classical body through a representational architecture draws attention to an authority derived from real, physical bodies. Hannah writes, "Without the presence of classical notions of architecture—of stone, wood, steel and class—an impermanent, plastic form of architecture draws attention to a body that is not the classical, idealized body." (2003, p. 14) The human body under, in or on top of the clear plastic surface gives rise to, as Dorita Hannah describes, the untameable and improper body. (2003, p. 14)

Pinter draws on the idea of the abject body in his Nobel Laureate speech, in saying that the wounded body is undesirable in contemporary politics:

> "The story was dropped. Well, Tony Blair wasn't holding him in his arms, nor the body of any other mutilated child, nor the body of any bloody corpse. Blood is dirty. It dirties your shirt and tie when you're making a sincere speech on television" (Pinter, 2005).

Pinter's works echo this cleansed appearance of political war in the media, by transferring torture of the characters in his plays to a representation of architecture. A concept that is also written about by Vidler,

> "Thus where, in classical theory since Alberti, the house is a good house only insofar as it is constituted analogically to the body, and the city a good city for the same reasons, in Sartrean terms the body is only seen to exist by virtue of the existence of the house....The bomb that destroys the house does not destroy a model of the body, but the body itself, because the house is needed for the body to project it." (Vidler, 1996, 70)

It is only in this sentence in Vidler's essay that he hints at this reciprocal relationship between the body, architecture and authority. Through the analysis of Pinter's work this projection of the body onto the architecture is brought to the fore for further exploration.

In Pinter's work, he defers torture from the body to a diegetic room, an object in the room or placing it upstairs. Although there is a shift in focus towards the body

and this becomes apparent through Pinter's work—as his later plays become freer of representational architecture—the more politically explicit the work becomes. The Belarus Free Theatre's production *Being Harold Pinter* exaggerates this shift towards the empty set in their interpretations of Pinter's work. In the absence of a conventional architecture, the presence of the body becomes potent. The individual body fills the room that is empty of a collective idea of architecture.

In these performances it is not a study of a physical body, but rather bodily sensations. As such, the relationship between the architecture, body and authority is expressed through a metaphor that has investigated the symbolic gestures and meaning presented through a textual and visual analysis of the plays.
This third collection of case studies under Vidler's theme of "the idea that the building embodies some states of the body or, more importantly, states of mind based on bodily sensation," relies on metaphoric ties between the body, architecture and authority. This analysis draws more content towards the points in the discussion chapter that follows on living, breathing abject bodies – this is especially the case in the work of the Belarus Free Theatre and their explicit depictions of bodily torture. The progression of Pinter's work away from detailed and mimetic sets and then the Belarus Free Theatre's interpretations of his works, produced without a mimetic set, point to bodies as agents themselves, reciprocally constructing spaces and places.

Chapter 7: Discussion

As foreshadowed in the introduction, in this discussion chapter, the findings from this research will be used to expand on Vidler's discussion of the body via additional emphasis on three main points:

1. Living, breathing abject bodies,
2. Mobile bodies, and
3. Bodies as agents themselves reciprocally constructing spaces and places.

These are all points that Vidler lightly makes reference to in his work, and the findings in the case studies illustrate the potential for performance studies to expand and offer new areas for examination to architecture theory and theorists on these particular points.

7.1 Introduction

The research set out to build theory on the identified absence of the body in architectural discourse through looking at the way a series of performances present a more complex body in a more complex relation with architecture than previously imagined. This thesis set out to define a more complex relationship between the body, architecture and authority than previously conceptualised; more specifically, to introduce this as reciprocal relationship between the body and architecture. The introduction, literature and contextual review identified a need to expand architecture theory to move beyond ideal bodies, and discuss living, breathing, abject human bodies, moving bodies, and bodies in a reciprocally co-constructive relationships with space and architecture. Vidler notes that although postmodern architecture theory and practice have tried to reinscribe the body through a mutilated and broken-apart body, these new inscriptions still fail to consider complex, moving, physical bodies.

The performances analysed in the case studies in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine Vidler's arguments on how the body and architecture relate to each other in terms of authority. This is especially evident through the disruption of box sets, or

representational architecture, on the stage and the way in which this mimics the assumed authority embodied in architecture. In terms of performance, the rejection of representational architecture on the stage brings the relationship between the suggested authority of architecture over the body into question and sheds new insight into more complex, messy bodies. Performance's ability to demonstrate these themes has indicated a number of points at which theory on architecture and the body could be extended.

Using the first theme, where "the sense that the environment as a whole is endowed with bodily or at least organic characteristics" (Vidler, 1996, p. 71), the play *Stockholm* was analysed. This work was used to expand on Vidler's theme where the representational architecture of the set took on bodily characteristics, imitating bodily functions and even becoming a character within the play. By taking on these characteristics, the set was able to clearly assert its authority over the characters. The house—the character Us—warns Todd about a violent future in the basement of the house but Todd ultimately rejects this warning, favouring the position of the captor, Kali, which is typical of Stockholm Syndrome. This set is so intrinsic to the story that it travelled with the play all the way from the UK to Australia. The play's aesthetic seemingly can't be recreated without the physical set.

In the second grouping of case studies, a physical theatre set of representational architecture was absent in the two works discussed. Instead, the body was used in place of a theatre set to represent the architecture. These case studies covered Vidler's theme that the building *is* a body of some kind (1996, p. 71). The case studies, *Boy Girl Wall* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, again demonstrated the overarching theme of the authority expressed between the body and architecture. These two plays encapsulated that the relationship between the body, architecture and authority is a reflexive as well as reciprocal one.

The third selection of works discussed under Vidler's theme, "the idea that the building embodies some states of the body or, more importantly, states of mind based on bodily sensation" (1996, p. 71) foregrounds some of the more complex themes in the study and contributes some of the most interesting theory to the field of scenography. This is in part because the plays themselves are concerned with more complex themes regarding the body. Issues of political repression, dictatorship, and torture are always going to introduce rich topics for discussion. These are topics that

evoke engagements with particular states of mind and bodily sensations. The depth of Pinter's work in this study is really drawn from the tortured body represented by the architecture, or more so, its absence. As Vidler describes, in a parallel progression to modern architecture, scenography has focused on the elaborate representational architecture set and has forgotten about the body. Today, there is a return of the body to the stage that is emptied of the detailed representational theatre set and replaced with an authentic and disturbing representation of the body, as demonstrated in the work of the Belarus Free Theatre.

From these case studies, three points have been identified that illustrate how performance works can usefully extend architecture theory regarding architecture, the body and authority; these will be described at length below.

7.2 Living, Breathing Abject Bodies

The first point at which insights from examining performances can extend architecture theory is the way they represent and emphasise the imperfect, abject body on the stage. This adds useful new insight to Vidler's work on the postmodern, mutilated and damaged body in architecture, as noted in the literature and contextual review. Vidler describes the postmodern body of architecture, "as described in architectural form, it seems to be a body in pieces, fragmented, if not deliberately torn apart and mutilated almost beyond recognition" (Vidler, 1996, p. 67).

In two of the works analysed in this thesis, the emphasis on the tortured, dismembered body is also emergent or re-emergent on the postmodern stage. In *Stockholm*, there is an explicit correlation between the tortured body and architecture—the sliced and gutted home of Todd and Kali that eventually transfers to the broken bones of their unborn children. The second work to be analysed in this section of the discussion is Belarus Free Theatre's work *Being Harold Pinter.* In this work, the artists move from Pinter's almost polite suggestion of bodily torture through architectural metaphor to an overt representation of torture on the real, physical body of a performer.

Both of these plays demonstrate Vidler's assertion of the move to a more abject and flawed body in postmodernity, both in architecture and performance. They

demonstrate that the postmodern body is an "auto-critique of a modernism that posited a quasi-scientific, propaedeutic" (Vidler, 1996, p. 69) body that was clinically observed by both architect and performer from a distance.

In Lavery's *Stockholm*, the representational architecture of the theatre set adopts subjective qualities to become a third character in the play. The play was analysed under the first theme from Vidler's text, as not only did the set in Lavery's play manipulate and interact with its inhabitants, but also became wounded—gutted (Lavery, 2008, p. 34). This sense that a building might become sick or wounded has a long history in architecture, as Vidler relays when he writes about 15th-century architect Filarete and his personification of buildings: "Filarete compared the building's cavities and functions to those of the body, buildings and cities may fall ill: a building, may, he hazarded, become sick and die, whence it needs a good doctor, the architect, to cure it" (Vidler, 1996, p. 68). Represented here is the sense of an abject, imperfect body of architecture that contains cavities, performs bodily functions and can become ill—in contrast to the stoic figure of perfect proportions represented in the Vitruvian man. In the first two scenes of the play, the set of *Stockholm* represents an image of domestic perfection but, as the play's story progresses and the audience is made aware of the struggle between the characters, the lighting becomes darker and the set more abstract and less recognisable as an idyllic domestic setting. It is as though the set moves from the idealistic setting of domestic sitcoms to a domesticity that is unsettling but still recognisable. The set in decay in the later scenes of *Stockholm* is scarred and damaged and yet still provides familiar scenes of domesticity—encapsulating the sense of uncanny that Vidler depicts in his description of postmodern architecture.

This depiction of the abject body in contemporary and postmodern architecture is aptly described by Vidler when he writes:

> Further, this "body" is, paradoxically enough, precisely as a sign of a radical departure from classical humanism, a fundamental break from all theories of architecture that pretend to accommodation and domestic harmony… this body no longer serves to center, to fix, or to stabilize. Rather, its limits, interior or exterior, seem infinitely ambiguous or extensive; its forms, literal or metaphorical, are no longer confined to the recognizably human but embrace all biological existence from the embryonic to the monstrous; its power lies not in the model of unity but in the intimation of the fragmentary, the morselated, the broken. (Vidler, 1996, 70)

As the idealised domestic setting of *Stockholm* gradually decays in front of the audience, in what could be seen as an obvious rejection of the traditional box set in the theatre, it also overlays new meaning to the representational theatre set; a more complex relationship between body and domestic architecture. Vidler writes that

> on first inspection, this cutting of the architectural body might appear to be no more than an obvious reversal of tradition, an almost too literal transcription of the idea of "dismembering architecture". But a closer examination of the diverse sources of this new bodily analogy reveals a more complex relationship to previous "embodiments" from the Renaissance to modernism than that of simple pictorial caricature. (Vidler, 1996, 71)

The action of "gutting" the *Stockholm* set, of stripping Todd and Kali's home from domestic bliss to threatening violence, is more than the scenography mimicking the characters' actions and dialogue; it is also a representation of a more complex relationship between the characters and their setting. In *Stockholm*, the set and actors depend on each other to convey the story to the audience. Rather than the actors becoming a prop within the set, or the set forming a mere background, the relationship between the set and the actors is intrinsic to the story. In *Stockholm*, the manipulative, violent and sometimes caring relationship between the characters and their setting portrays a complex, real and abject body to an audience. This bodily abjection is more explicitly demonstrated in the Belarus Free Theatre's *Being Harold Pinter.*

The set design for *Being Harold Pinter* appears immediately as tense, unfamiliar and stark to its audience. There is an awareness of each individual prop and each individual performer's body as they occupy the stage. This starkness builds the tension around the activity on stage. The play depicts bodily torture, played out by the performers, interpreting Pinter's work with fuller, physical violence and torture. This explicit display of violence and torture harks back to Vidler's identification of the uncanny in the postmodern body; he writes

> But these deliberately aggressive expressions of the postmodern corporeal also operate in another register, that of the strangeness evoked—as Freud noted with regard to the feeling of the uncanny—by the apparent "return" of something presumed lost but now evidently active in the work. In this context it would be, so to speak, the return of the body into an architecture that had repressed its conscious presence that would account for our sense of disquiet. (Vidler, 1996, p. 68)

To avoid this repressed body, the *Being Harold Pinter* set adopts an approach to design that emphasises the absence of the architecture, foregrounding the body, its

abjectness, weakness and susceptibility to torture.

The emphasis on the body in *Being Harold Pinter* is most palpable in the play's adaptation of *The Homecoming*. Without including the house in which the play is set, there is no method of deflecting bodily torture onto the architecture. Vidler writes about this acute awareness of the frail and abject body in the absence of architecture's presence when he writes,

> …the owner of a conventional body is undeniably placed under threat as the reciprocal distortions and absences *felt* by the viewer, in response to the reflected projection of bodily empathy, operate almost viscerally on the body. *We* are contorted, racked, cut, wounded, dissected, intestinally revealed, impaled, immolated; we are suspended in a state of vertigo, or thrust into a confusion between belief and perception. It is as if the object actively participated in the subject's self-dismembering, reflecting its internal disarray or even precipitating its disaggregation. (Vidler, 1996, p. 68)

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the more political Pinter's work became, the less his scripts detailed intricate requirements for sets. His later works called for very minimal sets, with no specific reliance on any properties for the actors to use. These works have been understood as more explicitly violent; however, the adaption of *The Homecoming* in *Being Harold Pinter* demonstrates that violence was also present in Pinter's earlier works. Without the detailed representational architecture to absorb the violence, the bare stage in *Being Harold Pinter* makes the audience acutely aware of the inherent violence in Pinter's work and that his earlier works still harboured the same concepts of power and violence of his later, more overtly political, ones. This awareness of bodily torture in *The Homecoming* produced by the Belarus Free Theatre encapsulates the sensation of the uncanny that Vidler writes about. The violence and abject bodies in Pinter's plays were always present, but in his earlier works they had been repressed by the detailed representational architecture of the theatre set. The presence of this bodily violence in his early works is so clearly brought to light by the Belarus Free Theatre through the absence of the mimetic theatre set.

7.3 Mobile Bodies

The second point at which insights from examining performances can extend architecture theory is the way that they are concerned with a living, moving body in

the theatre in comparison to the static immobile body of architecture as expressed in the Vitruvian man. As noted in the literature and contextual review, this vital, moving body can also be repressed by the box set or by representational architecture in the theatre— what Vidler describes as the static nature of architecture, the lifeless body of architecture (1996, p. 71). Vidler writes that, in architecture, "the qualities of the architectural object, no matter what the intentions of its makers, were now all those of inanimate nature, only to be understood by a process of projection" (1996, p. 70).

The two case studies discussed in this section explore pre- and postmodern modern architectures that are moving, animate and living architectures. The case studies are *Stockholm*, with its animated, reactive theatre set, and *Boy Girl Wall* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where a performer acts out the role of a wall, floor or ceiling within the play. All three of these plays demonstrate critical links between social liberation and an animated, moving architecture in performance.

The *Stockholm* set represented an idea of domestic perfection in the kitchen, the kind of architecture that Vidler describes: "embodied in an architecture that mirrored all the states of a regenerated and healthy body but corresponded as well to similarly healthy mind" (Vidler, 1996, p. 74). When the characters Todd and Kali are in this space, they move through a choreographed series of movements that demonstrate their athleticism and synchronisation, portraying the healthy body and mind that the architecture of their kitchen setting is willing them to display. As the play continues and the characters' mental and physical well-being deteriorates, so too does the architecture of the set. The spaces the characters move into as the story progresses also prevent the performers from moving with the same rhythm and precision as before; the vertical bed fixed some metres above the stage forces the actors to move in a haphazard manner as each move becomes a potential risk. The architecture represented in the set for *Stockholm* heightens the intensity of the characters' interactions by altering their environment, restricting their movement and ultimately becoming a moving body itself.

Early in the play, the set becomes animated, interacting with the characters in the play on stage. While this decision to have the stairs bloom with flowers, the vertical bed that suddenly tilts forward, the fridge that magically filled with booze or the desk top that turns to water might seem tangential to the narrative of the play; visually, it could come across as quite kitsch. All of the movement within the set

discloses the inherent danger within Todd and Kali's domestic bliss. As one *New York Times* reviewer writes, "All the elements collude here to keep you—as well as Todd and Kali—off balance…" (Brantley, 2013). The movement of the set facilitates its role as creator of their domestic setting—it frames and precedes the characters—and, through its movement and animation, the audience is made aware of this in a way that previous box sets have not alluded to with such force. The motionless state of the box sets employed in Pinter's early works produced a subtle relationship between characters and their domestic setting communicated through the text. In *Stockholm*, the power struggle between the characters and their domesticity is physically enforced—the set's power over the characters' situation is felt by the performers.

The movement enacted in the *Stockholm* set is abstractly linked to the notion of a body. Probably the strongest link that its movement can associate to bodily function is the moment when the set's stairs bloom at the point (of what we assume) is Todd's orgasm. This action of the set relates to the previous theme of the abject body as well. This abstraction of the body and motion represented in art and architecture is one that is resultant of modernity; as Vidler writes,

> attempts to dismember the classical body in order to develop an expressive model of movement were thus dedicated not so much to its eradication but to its reformulation in modern terms…there seems to be no fear that the body is entirely lost: rather the question is one of representing a higher order of truth to perception - of movement, forces, and rest. (Vidler, 1996, 67)

As the story progresses in *Stockholm*, a figurative loss of the body to the architecture becomes manifest, in that the actors bodies are threatened and move with less power.

The *Stockholm* set then represents an abstract body—one that is animated and moves, but is contrived and controlled. The animated bodies in *Boy Girl Wall* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* convey a very different meaning to the audience and to the narrative of each of the plays. In these plays, a performer's body is used to portray a wall (in the case of *Boy Girl Wall*, the performer also plays ceiling, window, door and floor). As discussed in Chapter 5, when the performers play out the character of wall, there is a default stance that is reminiscent of the pose in Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of the Vitruvian Man. There is no practical reason for this pose in either play, but it would appear to contribute some meaning to the

performers' particularly comical portrayals of a wall.

The portrayal of Wall in both of these plays presents an architecture that is loose and free moving at one point, for comic affect, and then stoic and static at another point. The purpose of this pose is, I propose, a challenge to the authority that architecture represents. Vidler writes that Renaissance architecture began liberating

> these hard, frozen forms to express a state of wellbeing, vigorous and wellbeing.... Light heartedness has given way to heaviness, flesh is softer and flabbier, limbs are not mobile but imprisoned. Movement becomes less articulated but more agitated and faster, in dances of restless despair or wild ecstasy (Vidler, 1996, p. 70).

He goes on to write that this motion ceased with the technological obsession brought along by modernity. These two plays draw attention to this contrast between fluid free moving bodies and motionless architecture. They emphasise that once the performer becomes an element of architecture, their movements become restricted, uncomfortable and unnatural to the body—echoing Tschumi's sentiments that architecture is an event: a playful, yet violent, act upon the body that manipulates and contorts it (1996, p. 124).

Here too, parallels to the abject body can be drawn. As Vidler writes, the motionless body represents a sense of wellbeing, whereas bodies in motion are restricted and imprisoned by architecture. They move in opposition to the architecture and as such act to threaten the "health and wellbeing" of the order provided by the architecture (Vidler, 1996, p. 69). Thus, when the performer enacts the Wall, they are entombed in a position as though imprisoned, despite the obvious ability to freely move and thereby creating the moment of comedy.

7.4 Bodies as Agents Themselves Reciprocally Constructing Spaces and Places

The third and final point at which insights from examining performances can extend architecture theory is the emphasis placed on the body as reciprocally co-creating architecture in postmodern theatre. There has been a desire in architectural theory to demonstrate and better understand the way in which the body and architecture reciprocally co-create each other (Tschumi, 1996, p. 124), and this is a central motivation to writing this thesis, as discussed in the literature and contextual review. Interestingly, in the use of what theatre makers today call a DIY aesthetic, plays like *Boy Girl Wall* and *Being Harold Pinter* show this co-creation in action.

In this intermediating culture, continued growth of Do It Yourself theatre is not so

surprising. The quality and depth of the work emerging from this stream of performance makers is perhaps what takes most people by surprise in Robert Daniel's curated book *Do. It. Yourself* he surveys numerous productions and theatre companies who are making D.I.Y. theatre, including, Accidental Collective, Low Profile, Made in China, Milk Presents and Suitcase Royale. The book points to the invention and continuous growth of D.I.Y. theatre being born as a way of circumnavigating the "gatekeepers" of traditional theatre management (Daniels, 2014, p. 4). D.I.Y. theatre proffers an opportunity for theatre makers to devise works from audience input and funding rather than the top down mechanisms of large theatre houses.

The DIY aesthetic describes works that aren't necessarily amateur but works that reject traditional notions of the theatre, and provide "subtle critique of established order" (Dechery, 2011, p. 51). It can be an attempt to transcend the divide between performers and audiences, even though highly skilled and trained artists have quite often created the works. There are some instances where the DIY aesthetic in performance can encompass untrained performers; unscripted performances or performance works that transcend a division between theatre maker and audience maker—that is, the type of theatre where a performer could be part of the audience and vice versa. Many theatre makers are intentionally driven to the DIY aesthetic in an attempt to "escape from the conventions and rules inherent to traditional art forms and established canons" (Dechery, 2011, p. 56). DIY theatre is about meta-theatre, which is theatre about theatre, and, and its form and content show how the characters, stories, and scenes are constructs and not naturally derived. In this research, it demonstrates how the relationship between body, authority and architecture is constructed. It brings to the fore that architecture can exist on the stage as an attempt by power holders to represent a productive ideal body that is not natural, but contrived. Through this identification of this falsely conceived body and the authority that it represents, the authority embodied in representational architecture on stage is ripe for contestations in the theatre.

The works selected to be discussed in this section, *Boy Girl Wall* and *Being Harold Pinter*, both use a meta-theatrical DIY aesthetic as part of their effort to either overtly or subversively challenge conventional ideologies or political systems. In contrast to plays such as *Stockholm*, in both of the performances, the sets are simple, but not necessarily without complexity. While some were developed through

the guidance of a dedicated set designer or architect, the appearance of the set is not one that is central to the play, in that any of the properties or sets are not unique to the play, are often composed of everyday objects, and could be replaced easily and without the guidance of a trained designer. In both of these performances (again, in contrast to a play such as *Stockholm*), the way in which architecture and the body relate to and create each other is shown—the equivalent to if we saw the set hands behind the walls in *Stockholm* making the flowers bloom and so forth.

The Belarus Free Theatre's *Being Harold Pinter* embodies the notion of a DIY aesthetic through a number of its approaches to theatre making. The Belarus Free Theatre has been forced out of conventional theatre circuits via the political structures of the country from which the group hails. With political restrictions on media and cultural content the Belarus Free Theatre are not only excluded from mainstream Belarusian theatres, but also forced to perform underground, outside of any type of theatre. This means that their shows cannot be promoted and are most often performed in the homes of friends or in abandoned spaces. In a sense, this could be seen as site-specific theatre; however, the performances are not planned in response to the site, as the location is often not determined until shortly before the work is performed. Therefore the works are rather an immediate, often improvised response to the site. These indeterminate sites, however, undoubtedly have an impact on how the works are 'designed' and constructed.

For the Belarus Free Theatre, being free of the conventional theatre circuit is an act that, as Vidler describes, "dramatically illustrates the urge to dissolve the authoritarian body of the architect into the world that receives its designs" (1996, p. 68). That is, by rejecting the spatial organisation of the theatre, their work acts to not only reject the architecture but also the authority that it represents. By this, their works are exemplary of a "DIY mode that rejects externalised modes of moral authority sourced from society and religion and privileges personal responsibility, self knowledge and self care as structures of moral action" (Dechery, 2011, p. 124), Before a line is spoken or a performer moves, the audience is aware of the political activist subtext within the play—it is visibly present through both the location of the performances and the set design.

The production design for *Being Harold Pinter* also communicates a political message to its audience. The absence of any representational architecture in the

theatre set (also due to not being funded and the need for transportation and ease of assemble and disassembly for a theatre company that may need to flee police or persecution in the case that they were caught performing) places focus on the performers, their bodies, and the stories that they are communicating. It is a play that rejects authority and therefore has no place for its representation through architecture on the stage. This act visually places the body in a position of uncompromised power; the body is not competing with any other significant element on stage. For the Belarus Free Theatre, DIY is not merely an aesthetic choice for the look and feel of the production but more so a method for communicating the political oppression experienced by people in Belarus. By placing such a strong emphasis on the body, and of the tortured body in particular, this is communicated in a way that elicits an empathetic response from the audience.

Boy Girl Wall and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* explicitly challenge the notion of the bodily authority of architecture. With both plays utilising the body as a wall, they bring forward for critique what Vidler asserts as the 'myth' of the body that is central to architecture, when he writes, "the body, its balance, standards of proportion, symmetry, and functioning, mingling elegance and strength was the foundation myth of building" (Vidler, 1996, p. 67). In both of these plays, the thought that the body is central to architecture is brought into question; when the body actually becomes the architecture, it is seen to be mocking the architecture and the authority that it embodies. Vidler writes that architecture has a tendency to, in fact, diminish the body by placing its existence into question, "in a first instance, the body, rather than forming the originating point of a centred projection, is itself almost literally placed in question" (Vidler, 1996, p. 71). What both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Boy Girl Wall* then do is to question the authority of architecture by inverting this relationship.

The DIY aspect of this device employed by both plays is most explicit in *Boy Girl Wall* and the Mechanicals' production of *Pyramus and Thisbe* within *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* As seen in Chapter 5, Shakespeare was advocating for the rights of amateur performers through his representation of the Mechanicals' production of Pyramus and Thisbe. This play within *A Midsummer Night's Dream* also enables a subversive critique of the patriarchal and authoritarian structures in the meta-narrative of the play. Shakespeare draws attention to the value and position of amateur performers to court (which Queen Elizabeth had banned and Shakespeare

opposed). In *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the use of a performer to enact the wall is explicated in the text—that the troupe could not afford sets and thus one performer would have to perform the wall. Although not presented with such specific emphasis, the use of a performer to convey the architecture is also present in *Boy Girl Wall.*

On the Melbourne Theatre Company's website, one of the *Boy Girl Wall* realisers, Matthew Ryan, states that the minimalism of the *Boy Girl Wall* production design "allows the audience to insert themselves into the magical, whimsical setting, and be swept away" (Melbourne Theatre Company, 2012). He goes on to say that, "by keeping the walls blank and then providing reference points, whether they are design or performative or word references, they allow the audience to imagine and conjure in their heads, and that is very rewarding for an audience member" (Melbourne Theatre Company, 2012). The Escapists put forward very well-thought out reasoning for their aesthetic decisions and that the simplicity of the set affords a certain level of audience interaction in terms of how the spaces within the play might be imagined. The Escapists' use of the DIY aesthetic also accommodates a visual subtext to the play—in the same manner as the production design for *Being Harold Pinter* by the Belarus Free Theatre communicates something to the audience beyond what is contained within the text.

Boy Girl Wall critiques cultural capitalism, and through its set design it also critiques conventional theatre (although the play has mostly enjoyed success in state-owned conventional theatres). The use of the performer's body to play the dividing wall also conveys a rejection of the authority imbued within the architecture of the flats that is central to the story. The character of wall is comical, making a mockery of this authority embodied with the architecture, as Neridah Waters, one of the *Boy Girl Wall* realisers, states: "The character of The Wall is a hopeless romantic and also a bit clunky and awkward. So with the piano I created a little song for him, a romantic and quite reflective song that on the toy piano sounds quite dodgy, but sits well with the character" (Melbourne Theatre Company, 2012). Waters' comments describe an architecture that is incomplete, imperfect, flawed and clumsy. Through The Escapists' depiction of the Wall through the body, an alternate architecture is devised, more closely related to the imperfect body.

As seen here, the DIY aesthetic in theatre can provide architecture with entirely new ways of reading the authoritative relationship between the body and architecture. With the ever-growing movement of 'DIY Urbanism' 'Guerilla

Urbanism' and 'design activism', community groups—often untrained designers—manipulate, alter and amend the built environment in their city to better meet their community needs. There is much that architecture can learn from the unstructured interventions created by these amateur groups. Similarly, the DIY aesthetic has much to offer trained set designers and scenographers about the potential of production design. Further documentation of the aesthetic created by amateur designers is a much-needed area of research to be fulfilled.

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Chapter 8: Conclusions

The aim this thesis was to build on architectural theory of the body through an examination of performance works, and, in these works, look for points at which approaches to the body in architectural theory could be extended and expanded. In the introduction, literature and context review, this thesis established the problem of the body in the discipline of architecture. As described in Rob Imrie's work (2003), the problem of the body to architecture is widespread across the discipline both in theory and in practice:

> although there are some variations in conceptions of the body, most architects either have no conception of the human body or conceive of it in reductive terms: that is, the body is either reduced to a mirror or self-referential image of the architect's body or as 'normalised'. (Imrie, 2003, p. 51)

The body considered throughout the history of architecture has been a static, male, two-dimensional, able body of unrealistic proportions. Further, the basis of architecture, historically, has been to control the body, and make it behave like this ideal body, to shore up social order. In the first two chapters of this thesis, I established that while architectural theorists are attempting to expand on the limited understanding of the body in architecture - by redefining the perceived authority of architecture over the body to be a reciprocal relationship - where authority is derived from the both the body and architecture, attempts have been unsatisfactory. This has been because the body is still analysed abstractly through the lens of psychoanalysis, in particular through the work of Freud and Lacan by theorists such as Anthony Vidler.

The introduction, literature and context review also established that representations of architectural space in theatrical set design, through either mimetic sets (fourth wall removed) or the many other methods for representing architecture in performance discussed in this thesis, proffers opportunities for multiple, new readings and interpretations of architectural space. This thesis aimed to utilise the potential for theatre to bring new readings of architectural space by a process of 'short circuiting'. This involved expanding on the existing literature on the relationship between the body, architecture and authority by reading it in response to a range of performances. Analysing architectural theory as presented in Vidler's "Architecture Dismembered" especially and also Tschumi's "The Violence of

Architecture". These texts were read in relation to a set of performances, which expanded on the themes on architectural space that are explored in these two texts. Bringing these two unlikely elements together became a way to provide new readings and theoretical propositions to architecture and architectural theory.

The analysis of the performances in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 emphasised the reciprocity in the relationship between the body and architecture to derive authority. It demonstrated examples where architecture exerts its authority through controlling the body. It also demonstrated examples where the body or bodily analogy is used to overthrow the authority embodied in architecture, subversively, explicitly or implicitly. This was demonstrated in the performances, in which actual moving, living bodies struggled with architecture, via the actor or characters, and how they related with the set design and properties, or how they used their bodies in the absence of a theatre set. Each group of case studies examined a bodily exchange that moves from a tacit interaction between the body and architecture through to a metaphoric exchange that is increasingly distant from the physical body. I will now make conclusions about each of these chapters.

In Chapter 4, the play *Stockholm* was discussed under Vidler's first theme, "the sense that the environment as a whole is endowed with bodily or at least organic characteristics" (1996, p. 71). The authority in this play is enacted through the representational architecture where the setting mimics functions of the body. Through the blossoming stairs at the point of orgasm, the misleading fluid table top, the visual trickery of the fridge and its short monologue during the climax of the play. As the set ultimately becomes the character, Us. The adoption of bodily characteristics by the *Stockholm* set exerts its authority over the character's situation when the character Us, the house, elicits the ultimate demise of the characters' relationship and their unborn children. The climactic scene in the play results as Todd, the hostage, sympathises with Kali, the captor, and rejects the house, the authority creating the Stockholm Syndrome, which is the premise of the play. The audience is only made aware of the house's potency in the characters' situation through its animation and ability to communicate with the characters in its monologue. Thus, it exhibits its role as authority via mimicking the human body.

On Chapter 5, the second theme of Vidler's, where "the architecture *is* a body of some kind" (1996, p. 71), saw the analysis of two plays, William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and The Escapists' *Boy Girl Wall*. These two plays, written and performed over a vast gap in time (over 400 years), share an aesthetic choice through a performer's body used to represent a Wall. This body is not a suggestion in the production description of either play; rather, the wall *is* a character in these plays, has lines and a motivation, and, as was found in this research, a specific political agency. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the authority of Elizabethan controls over amateur performers is challenged via the Mechanicals' play—in which the authority that separates the two lovers in represented through Snout using his body to represent the wall. In *Boy Girl Wall*, the oppressive situations of work, art and capitalism and disenchantment from work are 'short circuited' by a power cut in the building that ultimately brings the two main characters together. The building power short circuits after the walls, floors, and doors of the building, acted out by a performer, collude to bring the two characters together. In these plays, it is when the body *is* the architecture that an implicit overthrowing of authority is achieved. That is, when the body becomes the architecture (the architecture *is* a body) symbolises an act of political subversion, challenging an authority that the characters re struggling against.

In chapter 6, the last theme, a metaphoric exploration between the body, architecture and authority was examined through Harold Pinter's work. In Pinter's work, gender and power struggles, especially, are diverted to textual metaphors of where the architecture has bodily sensation or induces certain states of mind, as described in Vidler's third theme. In *Being Harold Pinter* by the Belarus Free Theatre, the Pinter Room is stripped, and visual emphasis is placed on the body; in particular, an emphasis on a visual metaphor of bodily torture is brought to the fore. In these case studies, the notion that the architecture had any authority over the body was portrayed through either a textual or visual metaphor. The more recent the works, the more emphasis is placed on the body and less on the representational architecture.

Over the course of the thesis, the analysis of the performances supported Lefebvre's argument cited in the introduction; that it is through the body that architecture achieves its position of authority, and not that architecture simply exerts authority over the body, as existing modus operandi of architectural practice would argue. This was visible in *Stockholm*, where the authority of the detailed mimetic set is gained via the set mimicking functions of the body. It was also apparent in *Boy Girl Wall* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where authority is enacted and mocked when a performer acts out the role of an element of architecture. It was then also present in the study of Harold Pinter's plays and their interpretations in the works of the Belarus Free Theatre's *Being Harold Pinter.* In Pinter's early works, he uses textual metaphors that suggest that the architecture is the authority and then, as his works become more explicitly political, less representational architecture is present on stage. The Belarus Free Theatre's light touch scenography and emphasis on the body in *Being Harold Pinter* takes this new emphasis on minimalism, and bodies doing it themselves, constructing, deconstructing and battling with the set in reciprocal co-creative relations to the extreme.

As a result of the examination of these performances in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the discussion in Chapter 7 identified three points at which the examination of performance provides new ways through which architectural theory of body might be expanded and extended. Through this, new approaches to describing and demonstrating the reciprocal, co-constructive relation between architecture and body can be applied.

The first point arose from the way that the performances emphasised uncanny, abject, real, fallible bodies, in contrast to the idealised body portrayed in architecture. The second point derived from the way the performances emphasised moving bodies and the political agency of motion in the body in comparison to the static and stoic body represented in architecture. The third point came from the way the performances used a DIY aesthetic in production design, and how the body was especially present in these sets, thereby co-creating spatial agency. Through these case studies, an opportunity to explore this point was presented due to a number of the plays choosing this production design style. The DIY aesthetic is an area of production design research that is lacking work in the current literature on scenography and is ready for further exploration. The recent emergence of the DIY

aesthetic in the theatre—stripped back sets—has much to do with challenging existing institutionalised methods of making theatre and the oppressive dimensions of the mimetic realist set that dominates in main stage theatre

The importance of the absence of the mimetic theatre set is then not necessarily about creating low-cost productions, or productions that appear low cost—as in *Boy Girl Wall*, which very much adopted the DIY aesthetic but played in major theatre venues such as the Melbourne Theatre Company, or the Belarus Free Theatre's production of *Being Harold Pinter*, which, similarly, had a low budget aesthetic, but toured major international arts festivals. Rather, the choice to use this type of aesthetic in the set design and scenography conveys to the audience a rejection of the traditional institutions of theatre, and traditional relations between body, authority and architecture in theatre. This approach echoes much of Gay McAuley's arguments supporting site-specific theatre and the move away from the restrictions of the architecture of the traditional theatre.

As the study of these performances shows, the authority thought to be embodied in representational architecture on the stage is either a product of the body, or derived as a result of the body or its positioning in relation to the architecture. And these relations can be demonstrated and denaturalised in DIY theatre. Therefore, more work that theorises the scenographic practice of the DIY aesthetic could benefit both set designers and architects interested in challenging conventional relations between body, authority and architecture.

While this thesis' effort to contribute to architectural theory on the body, architecture and authority through examining performances is necessarily a speculative exercise, the method nevertheless provides indications as to how architectural theory might explore a more complex relationship between the body and architecture. The contribution that the case studies bring to existing architectural theory is to investigate physical moving bodies and not the bodies that architecture has traditionally dealt with. That is, the long history of architecture dealing with abstract bodies and the more recent reliance in architectural theory to look towards psychoanalysis, particularly Freud and Lacan, to define the body. The performers' bodies analysed in this thesis proffer more complex bodies that can be seen as abject, can be used to challenge architecture, and that are susceptible to injury and torture. Their bodies are the imperfect (real) body that moves, is gendered and interacts with

architecture. This relationship is, as Bernard Tschumi suggests, symmetrical—neither the body nor architecture can derive authority on the stage without the other. The contribution that this research makes to Vidler's essay "Architecture Dismembered" (1996) is to extend on some of his arguments. While supporting his polemic, this thesis has also pointed to ways in which further emphasis on the phenomena seen in the studied performances—not just the abject bodies, but also the animation of bodies, and the very transparent animation and reciprocal co-creation of the set design through bodies in DIY aesthetic theatre—could extend it.

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